Photoshop creative®

The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® inspiration and advice

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Wanted: dead or alive
Use textures for a realistic poster effect

Control your channels
How the Channel Mixer can fix colours

Scrapbooks from scans
Scan in resources for better scrapbooks

Enhance images with layers

Learn how the Layers palette can become an image-editing machine

55 pages of creative tutorials

Tile mosaics
Give photos a mosaic makeover with brushes, styles and masks

How to use Photomerge
A complete guide to stitching photos together for stunning panoramas

DigitalEdition GreatDigitalMags.com
ISSUE 73
ip IMAGINE PUBLISHING

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Welcome

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk

A glimpse of what's in store this issue...

Mission Statement

Here at Photoshop Creative, we promise to always give you the best selection of resources to help improve your Photoshop skills. Whether it's in-depth guides to tools and techniques, or showing how to create a work of digital art, we'll make sure the information you get is accurate and informative. We want you to get the optimum Photoshop experience, and have as much fun using the program as we do putting the magazine together.

I want to fly the flag for panoramas this issue. I feel they don't get the credit and love that they deserve. Like many people, I don't have a raft of specialised camera lenses, so when faced with an immense view such as a beautiful skyline or the Empire State Building, the only way I can photograph the whole thing is either by going minimal with the zoom and getting it all in one shot, or zooming in for detail and taking many images to be stitched together later. Needless to say, I go for the latter. With the Photomerge function, it really isn't difficult to do and you can end up with some great images that make beautiful prints. Head to page 22 for our feature on taking your first steps with Photomerge, as well as a few other ideas for creative edits.

Once you have merged your ideal panoramic pic, we have some great tutorials to help you turn it into something even more spectacular. Page 54 has a tutorial on teasing out detail in badly exposed shots, while page 42 reveals how to control colour with the Channel Mixer (there's also a helpful video for this on the disc). And for the icing on the editing cake, head to page 66 for advice on creating digital frames. Make a stash of these and apply to your finished images – they really do add a professional touch.

Page 32 has a wonderful tutorial on using brushes and layer styles to make a realistic tiled mosaic effect from a photo, and if you have a troublesome family member who you want to bring to rights, check out our fun wanted poster tutorial on page 44.

Jo Cole **Editor in Chief**
jo.cole@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Next issue of Photoshop Creative on sale 5 May

pregnancy sweetheart embrace
stockings Christmas sexy
nobility man dog

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Photoshop news

The place where we look at the artists, products and services that can improve your Photoshop work

Advice centre
Tips, tricks and solutions

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Creative reviews
Make an informed choice

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www.photoshopcreative.co.uk

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How to transform any photo into a realistic tiled mosaic

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A lovely project for green-fingered scrapbook fans

On the CD

Amazing free resources

A plethora of brushes, actions, styles, photos and textures – not to mention videos!

Readers' Challenge

Check out the entries

Be inspired by the entries to our Readers' Challenge and then enter yourself by turning to page 98

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TIM SHELBOURNE

www.timshelbourne.net

Put away the grout and tiles – Tim reveals how to make a realistic mosaic effect using just a source photo, brushes, layer masks and styles. See how on page 32.

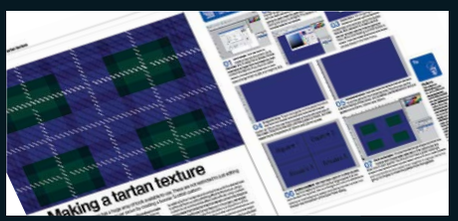
ZOE MUTTER

The Channel Mixer is a great tool when it comes to controlling the colour in your image. Zoe explains exactly how it works on page 42. She also takes a look at the Engraver II plug-in on page 84 to see what it offers.

DAVID AND SARAH COUSENS

www.coolsurface.com

If you have some outlaws that need to be caught, try creating this wanted poster to bring them to rights! It's a great way of working with textures and starts on page 44.



SIMON RUDD

www.simonrudd.info

In addition to taking up his usual place on the Photoshop Q&A panel, Simon also shows us how grids and brushes can create patterns in this issue; just turn to page 50.

MATT HENRY

www.matthenryphoto.com

Matt tackles two subjects this issue – the first is using dodge and burn techniques to fix exposure (p54), while the second involves applying a light leak effect (p62).

DUNCAN EVANS

www.duncanevans.co.uk

Duncan delves into the depths of the Layers palette to pull out the information you need to work smarter with this essential feature. Turn to page 58 to find out more.

KIRK NELSON

www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/kirk3d

Kirk suggests a great way of using layer masks to create digital frames for any image (p66) as well as devising a wonderful scrapbook design to celebrate the garden (p70).

GEORGE CAIRNS

www.georgecairns.com

If you are a Photoshop Elements user, George will be your new best friend. He tackles common Elements questions and queries in our Q&A pages over on 78.

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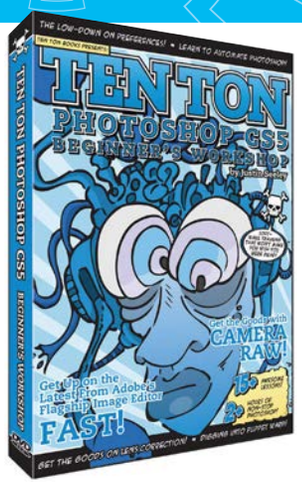
The latest news from the Photoshop community



Ten Ton Books presents CS5 Beginner's Workshop

TOP STORY: DVD TUTORIALS

Latest Photoshop DVDs to hit the shelves

Photoshop training

Tapping all available resources is key to progressing and pushing your skills further in Photoshop. Recent DVD releases from three expert training companies – Ten Ton Books, Infinite Skills and PhotoshopCAFE – cover the latest Photoshop versions and make sure no topic goes untouched.

Ten Ton Books' (**www.tentonbooks.com**) newest edition, *Photoshop CS5 Beginner's Workshop*, is aimed at beginners and intermediate users, but would benefit experienced artists too. For $39 you can enjoy over two and a half hours of raw Photoshop.

***Left:** Infinite Skills will help you get to grips with PS Elements 9 **Right:** Learn all about video and animation with this comprehensive DVD from PhotoshopCAFE*

Infinite Skills (**www.infiniteskills.com**) has released its latest training course, *Learning Adobe Photoshop Elements 9*, created for both Mac and Windows users. Instructor Jerron Smith takes you through

> "Recent DVD releases from three expert training companies cover the latest Photoshop versions and make sure no topic goes untouched"

many of the prominent features in Photoshop Elements 9, from special effects and painting to working with selections and layers. This mammoth compilation of 114 lessons offers nine hours of advice, and will set you back $49.95.

PhotoshopCAFE's (**www.photoshopcafe.com**) Jeff Foster hosts *Photoshop Video and Animation for CS4 and CS5 Extended*, which introduces another dimension for the image editor. Learn from this professional about manipulating video and motion graphics, as well as stereoscopic 3D effects from your DSLR or camcorder. Jump between any of the 44 lessons packed into the DVD using its intuitive interface and enjoy the five and a half hours of training. From importing video to creating your own animations with style, *Photoshop Video and Animation* has it all and will set you back $99.99.

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Books

Real Retouching

Uncover the remarkable world of retouching

Real Retouching takes on the challenge of digital doctoring

Focal Press adds a new title to its digital imaging collection with *Real Retouching*. Professional retouch artist and educator Carrie Beene takes you through, in an easy to follow, step-by-step style, what it takes to not only produce retouched artwork to a very high standard, but also to work in the industry and talk to clients to ensure that they get what they want.

The new title provides essential insights into retouching artwork, with some of the best kept secrets never before published. Advice comes in the form of practical know-how and industry tips, and the title also comes equipped with a complementary CD to work alongside the book with its tutorials. Carrie Beene has produced work for some of the biggest names in the industry, such as L'Oreal, MAC and Revlon, and brings her working experience to the masses.

Real Retouching will help you get your feet off the ground, whether you've just started learning Photoshop or have been using the photo editor for years and are looking to expand your skills.

The new title from Focal Press is available for $39.95, from **www.focalpress.com,** ISBN: 9780240814179.

3 OF THE BEST Landscape painters

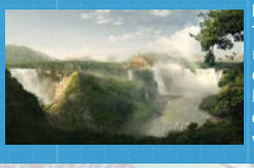
DUC. TRUONG HUYEN
http://fxevo.deviantart.com

Colour and composition come together harmoniously in Duc. Truong Huyen's landscape *Winter Path*. A talented landscape painter of oriental settings.

ANDREAS ROCHA
www.andreasrocha.com

Andreas Rocha paints with tremendous scale in his landscapes. Subjects include mountain ranges and faraway cities.

TIBERIUS VIRIS
www.tiberius-viris.com



Pro matte painter Tiberius Viris makes a living out of creating digital landscapes and ethereal, other-worldly vistas.

Interior design **A refreshing decorative alternative**

Self-adhesive wall art

The latest designs are all ready for your wall at Blik, the leading producer of funky, removable surface graphics. Artwork is printed onto self-adhesive material that can be removed and attached onto smooth surfaces. The company's original decal materials are made from a thin vinyl film that when positioned on a clean surface can last for years. Blik's Re-Stik products are the reusable kind and are made from a thicker material that can be repositioned and transported around.

Head to **www.whatisblik.com** to browse through with the help of the search filters such as Designers, Themes or Sizes. Find a design you like from the gallery of artwork, such as the latest design by artist Christy Flora made up of 15 colourful butterflies, and transform your wall.

Blik can go even bigger depending on your desired location and purpose as you can place a special request for a one-of-a-kind, customised graphic. Decals for your home start at $20. Your walls will never look the same again!

Flutter by Christy Flora is one of the reusable, Re-Stik products from Blik

Amy Ruppel's stylish tree design Branches *brings the outdoors in*

TOP 5

Five of our favourite online art and design shops

05
ClickforArt
www.clickforart.com
Limited edition, affordable artwork is available on cups, pillows, canvas and even eye masks.

04
Threadless
www.threadless.com/shop
Cool artwork printed on canvas or the shop's main attraction, t-shirts – all from $20.

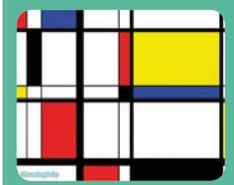
03
inPRNT
www.inprnt.com
A vast collection of quality giclée prints from $20. Styles include illustrations, fine art and graphic design.

02
WorldGallery
www.worldgallery.co.uk
Fine art, photography and famous artwork reprinted from as little as £5.99.

01
Shirtcity
www.shirtcity.net
Customisation is the name of the game at Shirtcity, and you can decorate your own t-shirt from £13.90.

Free resources for the Photoshop community
PhotoshopDaily

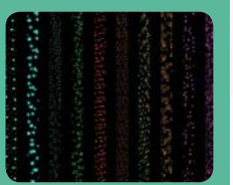
Head to **Photoshopdaily.co.uk** for these free brushes, images and more!



Mondrian desktop
A Mondrian inspired desktop image for your enjoyment. A lot can be done using a simple pattern with strong hues.

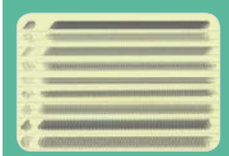
Ray paper pack
A set of five directional light streaks awaits your downloading. Apply layer styles and colours for authentic looking rays.

New Orleans photo pack From the amazing city of New Orleans, these stock images exemplify its inspiring architecture and colour.



Glitter brush set
There's never a bad time for a bit of sparkle, and that's why we've created a glittery brush set for you to download and enjoy.

BEST OF THE REST...



Pencil sketch brush set A set of ten brushes for digital sketches. Scatter and add dynamics to their tips for varied styles.

Firework files
Download this set of five transparent firework files and use Hue/Saturation to change their colours and intensities.

Circle pattern papers Download these brushes turned into patterned paper designs comprised of fun, colourful circles.

ALERT! | DON'T FORGET TO ENTER OUR READERS' CHALLENGE – SEE PAGE 98

pics of the week

Check out the 'Pics of the week' gallery from **photoshopcreative.co.uk**

JORGE REMMY

Gallery: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Jorge RemmY
Dear Agony by Jorge Remmy is brimming with emotion, as a young woman begins to fall and her dress shatters as she goes.

ROGER HUNTER

Gallery: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/the perdactor
Washed Up is a clever composition combining a photo of a coastline with enormous 3D lettering. It all looks completely normal!

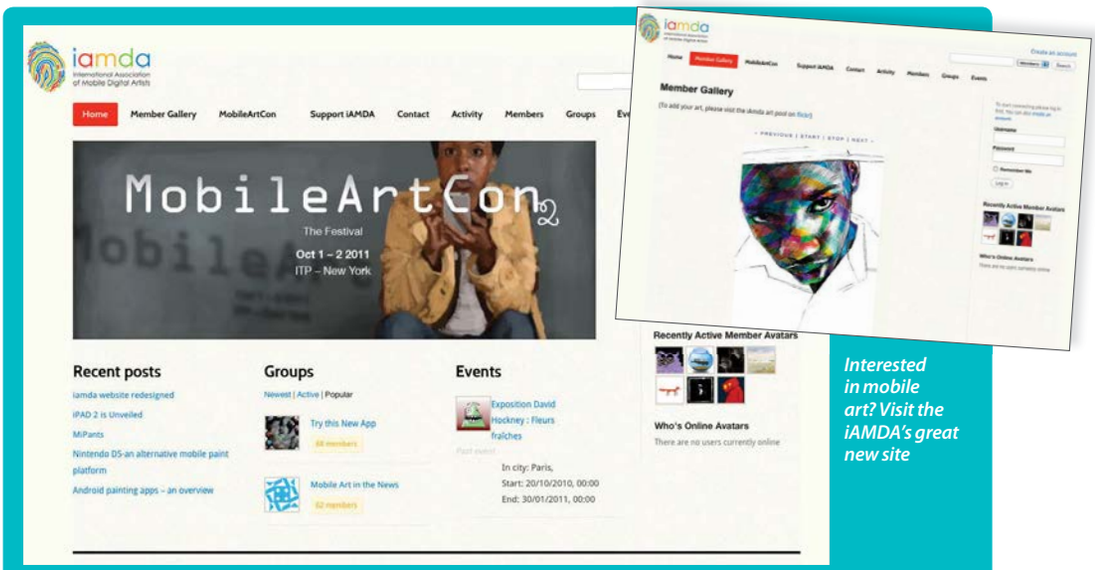
The BIG Question

We ask Tim Shelbourne, "can Photoshop create the feel of traditional painting?"

"CS5 saw the advent of the Mixer Brush tool and Bristle tips, both of which mark a sea-change for me in terms of Photoshop becoming a serious painting tool. In truth, the Mixer Brush tool in CS5 is a 'Version 1' and as such it's still at a relatively early stage of development. The ability the tool has to blend, pick up and apply colour at various degrees of thickness makes natural-media style opaque painting remarkably realistic.

"What makes the most difference in CS5 are the Bristle tips. Now artists aren't limited to static dab-based brushes, but can rely on tools that mimic natural, flexible bristle brushes incredibly accurately – after all, successful painting is all about effective mark marking. As a traditional painter turned digital, for me painting in CS5 comes very close to the real thing!"

Achieve a greater understanding of digital art at Tim Shelbourne's School of Digital Art
www.timshelbourne.net/tsda



Interested in mobile art? Visit the iAMDA's great new site

Website wonder

The latest website we just can't live without

HTTP://IAMDA.ORG

Mobile art is nothing new, however only recently has the collaboration of artists and the global recognition of its genre started to take shape in the form of online communities and innovative conventions. The International Association of Mobile Digital Artists, or iAMDA for short, has redesigned its website for a cleaner look and a better visual appeal. It aims to give more attention to the work of its finger painting members who use portable devices such as the iPad and other touchscreen tablets to create painterly masterpieces. With new artistic apps popping up all the time for such devices, and old ones constantly seeing updates, iAMDA has a lot to keep on top of in this burgeoning field.

You can set up your own iAMDA gallery on the site and join in on the latest happenings in the mobile painting community. Become a part of a group to discuss the newest apps or tools for the digital painter, for example, or simply browse the gallery section of the website to witness how art takes shape on mobile devices.

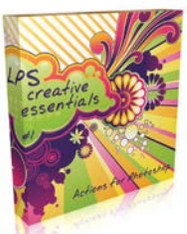
Actions resource Creative Essentials action set

Latest actions for vintage effects

From the workshops of alittlephotoshop comes the latest set of old school photographic effects for applying to your artwork. *LPS Creative Essentials v1* action set contains 40 artistic actions for re-creating styles from the seminal era of photography as well as a host of arty borders and finishes for your creations.

Experiment with a traditional Polaroid finish or an Ansel black-and-white conversion. Also part of the pack are Hipsta '69 and Jonny Yello '52, ready at the touch of a button.

Available from **www.alittlephotoshop.com** for £14.99, simply download and take into Photoshop through your Actions palette.



alittlephotoshop offers packs of actions for artistic effects

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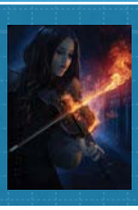


ANA FAGARAZZI

Gallery: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/freaky665

A mixed media composition created in Photoshop CS5 named *Fire Within*. Ana's musician, performing with her violin, is playing with fire.

PHIL FENSTERER

Gallery: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/fensterer

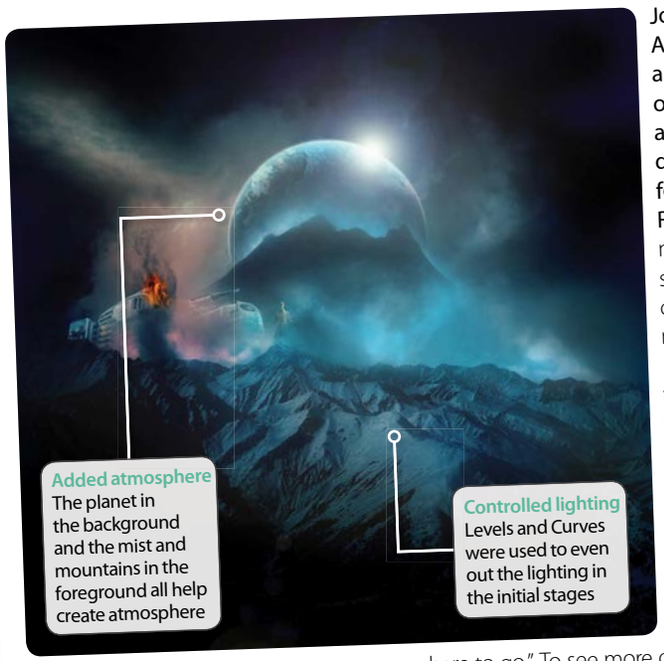
Inspired by the cartoon *The Hobbit*, Phil Fensterer's image sends a chill down the spine, with its grungy, skeletal features and human teeth.

ELLEN ALLMYE

Gallery: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Lokasp30

Ellen Allmye's image is a medley of text, graphics and photography. The end result is a strange but powerful blend, winning her Picture of the Week.

Digital sketchbook



João Martins, aka grENDel ART, works as a freelance artist, taking on a variety of commissions including album art, and has even designed book covers for prestigious publisher Random House. Using music and literature as his sources of inspiration, he's constantly looking to find new angles for his art.

João talks about the influences for his Sketchbook image *Lost In Space*: "It was inspired by some sci-fi movies that I saw as a young kid, like *Star Wars* and *Enemy Mine*. It is also an outburst of my fears, like if I was the only one person alive in the universe and had nothing to turn to or nowhere to go." To see more of his fantastic artwork, visit grENDel ART's portfolio at http://grendelart.carbonmade.com.

Step 1
João joined two background images and used Hue/Saturation to adjust colours.

Step 2
The Pen tool was used to split additional images, such as the mountain.

Step 3
More contrast was added and the light adjusted, before joining the final images.

twitter

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@PshopCreative Learned about something new in Photoshop this week? Let us know.

maronies100@PshopCreative Reading *Photoshop Creative* magazine - really useful.

BobsWebb@PshopCreative Issue 70 taught me how to make great B/W line drawings.

AbsoluteKreativ@PshopCreative Any guidelines for submitting Photoshop tutorials to your magazine?

updood_com@PshopCreative @PshopCreative is in Top 1000 Bournemouth (position: 10) at **www.updood.com**.

Print Try out theprintspace's 50-inch C-types

Print big… very big

Photo-printing specialist theprintspace has a new Chromira printer, and they're not afraid to use it. Now you can see your artwork printed as an extra large C-type up to a massive 50 inches. If 50 inches is too large, however, there's always the option to go for smaller sizes from 6 x 4 inches upwards (starting at £1.75).

Geri Tuneva from theprintspace explains, "we've previously only been able to print up to 30 inches, and with the addition of this new printer and processor we're able to produce huge, 50-inch C-types at the sharpest print quality possible."

A stunning 50-inch print from theprintspace

There is a choice of A formats (from £3.50) and even panoramic dimensions (from £9.35) depending on your image and your printing needs. The company offers a dedicated framing and mounting service too. Head to **www.theprintspace.co.uk** for all prices and to find out more.

Make a date

31 JULY 2011
Celeste Prize 2011
Open to all abilities, pick your category and submit your artwork – cash prizes. **www.celesteprize.com.**

ALERT! | DON'T FORGET TO ENTER OUR READERS' CHALLENGE – SEE PAGE 98

Windows®. Life without Walls™. Dell recommends Windows 7.

Stream it. Game it. Work it. Your choice.

Where to play tomorrow's digital entertainment?
Today's newest Dells.

The power to do more

XPS™ 15

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Reader's profile

Irvan Risnandar is a retouch artist working in London, who discovered Photoshop through a friend and quickly transferred his skills with the pencil onto the digital canvas

Make yourself known!

If you'd like to be featured here, send us an email to **pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk** with a few lines about who you are and what sort of Photoshop work you do.

Photoshop Creative reader Irvan Risnandar tells us about his current job for a London-based retouch team, Double Take Studios. He explains how working with other artists has helped him to pick up new techniques for designing and retouching in Photoshop, and how he made the somewhat illogical move from professional chef to Photoshop wiz.

We couldn't wait to ask him about his inspirations and working methods, and get some of his best advice for pushing your own digital skills.

How did you get started?

I was not very happy with my job as a chef. I started looking out for things that I enjoyed doing, which at that time was mostly drawing and singing. One day I saw my friend had Photoshop on his Mac and I just started experimenting.

What are you inspired by?

I'm inspired by many things. Lines and swirls are my favourites and I like doodling. The current trends in art and design also give me inspiration and direction as to what kind of image I want to go for.

What Photoshop tools do you find yourself using most, and why?

I use brushes a lot. Also the Healing Brush and Clone Stamp tools, since my current work is as a creative retoucher for Double Take Studios in London. I find it's very different from my previous job as it needs to be really fast and the time pressure is higher. But I do enjoy it so much. Learning new techniques every time with support from colleagues is extremely valuable, and they always help me build my skills.

Is there anything you'd like to learn to do that you can't already?

There are so many things I'd like to be able to do. For instance, to be able to do better comping and matte painting.

What's your favourite image that you've created in Photoshop?

Tainted is probably my favourite. I remember the sense of satisfaction I had upon finishing it. It was the first time that I had created a piece of work that I was truly happy with. I was still at an early stage in learning Photoshop, and so most of the time I was not happy with my work. This one was the first exception.

What advice can you give to other readers learning Photoshop?

Always seek to learn new techniques and do not be disappointed if your work is not as good as you hoped at first. You need to give it time and practice and you will see how quickly you improve.

Above: Frustrated *I was experimenting with a different style than I usually find myself doing*

Above: Just the Two of Us *This is one of my works that was partially painted*

Right: Guilty *This adds to my personal portfolio of artwork*
Far right: Seafood Special *An oil spillage gave me the idea for this piece*

CHECK OUT MORE OF IRVAN'S WORK HERE: **WWW.IRVANRISNANDAR.COM**

Left: Melly *This was the cover art for one of Indonesia's most famous singers, Melly Goeslaw, for her latest album*
Above: High *This is another creation that is just for my personal portfolio of artwork*

THE MAKING OF TAINTED

Irvan shares his Photoshop processes and techniques

01 Working from a reference First, get your reference image. All you need is the shape of the face and the eyes. Convert it to black and white by clicking Monochrome in the Channel Mixer, then paint the eyes black using the Brush tool. I used the Bevel and Emboss layer style to create the effect.

02 Add decoration Start painting the face with swirls. You can either use the Pen tool for this or paint with the Brush tool if you have a graphics tablet and the confidence. Do not over paint them, however. Make sure to leave some blank spaces and fill them with black using the Paint Bucket tool. This will give your image more variety and interesting features.

03 Insert smoke Once you're happy with the look, start adding some smoke behind and around the face. You can find plenty of smoke brushes on the web, which are usually free to download. Use the Warp tool to change the look of the smoke's direction and position it how you want.

04 An eye for detail When you finish and are happy with the overall look and shape of the smoke, you can start adding details. Here I put some glows and swirls in and around the face and smoke. Some of the shapes were custom brushes that I had created, and others I painted with the Brush tool.

05 Changing colour Now use the Color Balance and Curves adjustments (Image> Adjustments) to create the look you want. You could also apply a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to change or readjust the colour if you're not happy with it. Remember to have fun and be inventive!

NOTES | DON'T BE SHY, GET IN TOUCH AND REVEAL A BIT ABOUT YOUR WORKING PRACTICES

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Readers' Gallery

Send us your artwork to become a featured Photoshop artist

Can you picture your artwork on its own Gallery page? All you have to do is send in a selection of your latest Photoshop artwork and you could be featured.

Leading the way this issue are three excellent artists and fellow readers of **Photoshop Creative**, Marco Tornnelly, Fernando Matos and Paul Cook. Read what they have to say about their pieces and visit their galleries to uncover more from their portfolios. If you want to submit your own work, send them to us at **pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk**, along with a description of each one.

Marco Tornnelly

See more at: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Tornnelly

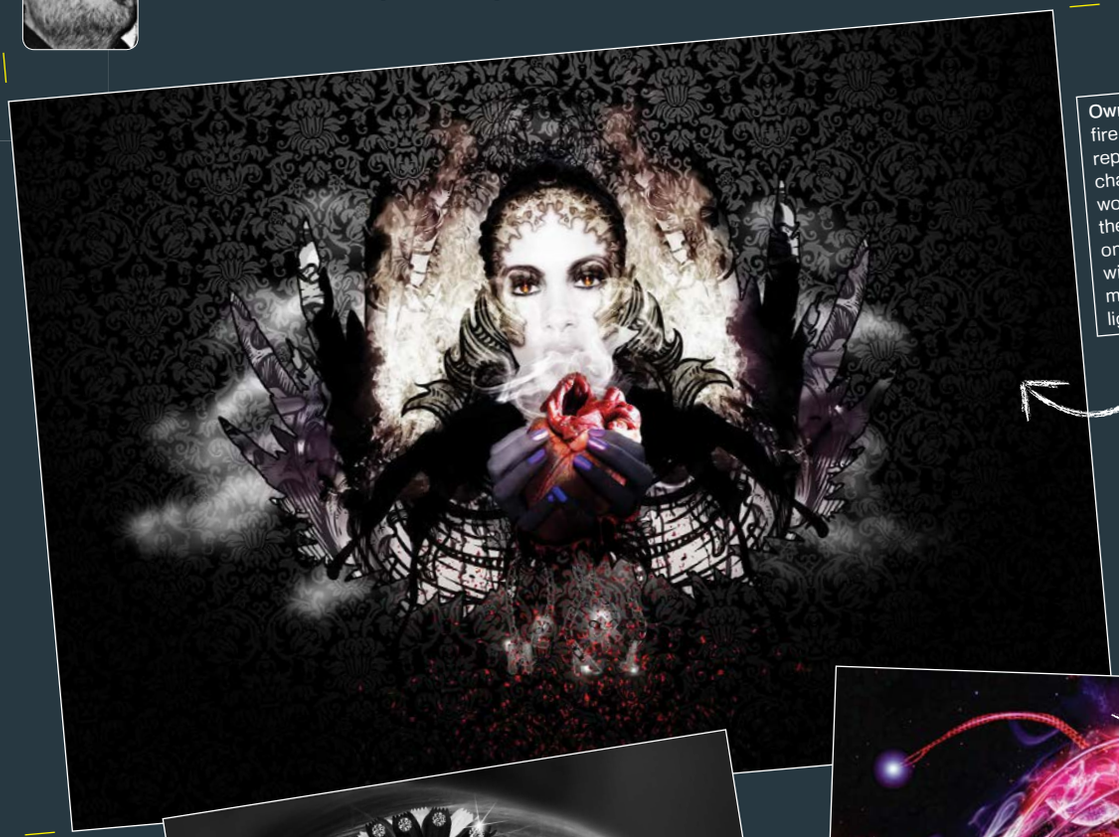
Hunter of Souls "One night I dreamed about a boy who hunted souls. I woke up at dawn, turned on my MacBook and created this image. I go numb every time I look at this picture."

Just Beginning "The concept of this work borders on the biblical passage of Genesis, where the world was created by God. The idea in this is the beginning of a path, the beginning of a lifetime."

The Power of Photoshop "In this image I sought the essence of feminine beauty with overt movements and lighting. It was amazing to develop an image for the cover of *Wired* magazine."

Fernando Matos

See more at: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Hideall



Own My Heart "The fire in the eyes represents him, the chains holding the word 'heart' represent the strength of the love one has for another, with her in the centre meaning that she gives light to his darkness."

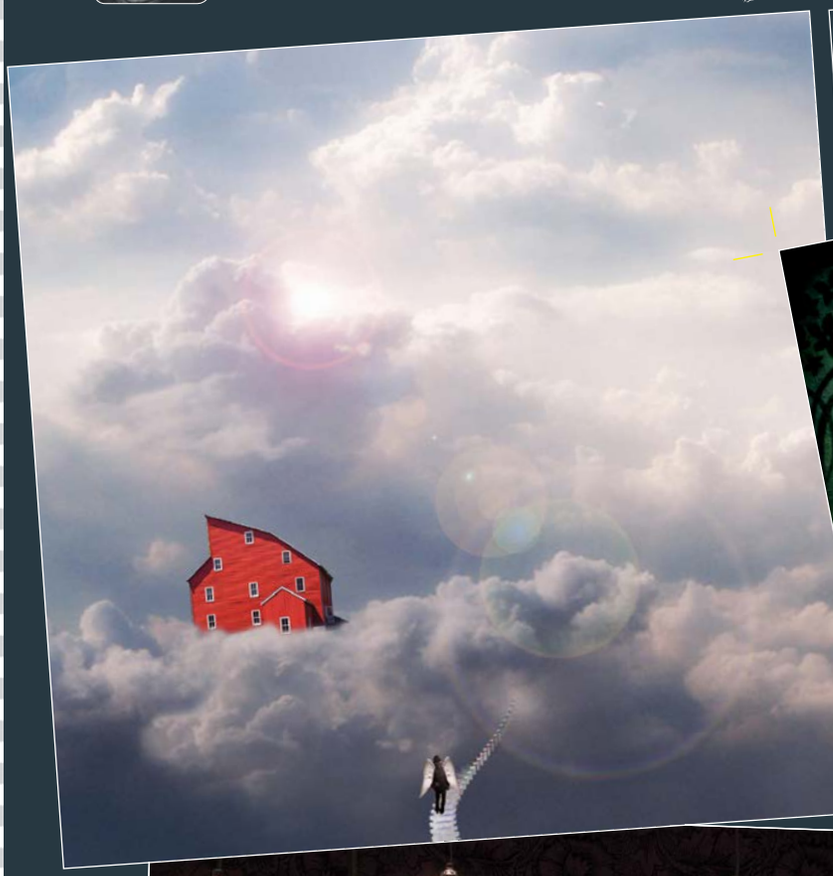
Ophiuchus "One day I logged on to Facebook and saw that everybody had a new different zodiac sign. I thought that *Ophiuchus* was going to be a good character design to compose in Photoshop because of all the details and the story behind it."

Sugarskull "From ornamental flowers and shapes made in Illustrator exported to Photoshop, a sugarskull can be quite fun to do. This is from the series 'Dia De Los Muertos – Decadence'. Everybody loves diamonds, but can a tiny little rock really make you happy?"

Readers' Gallery

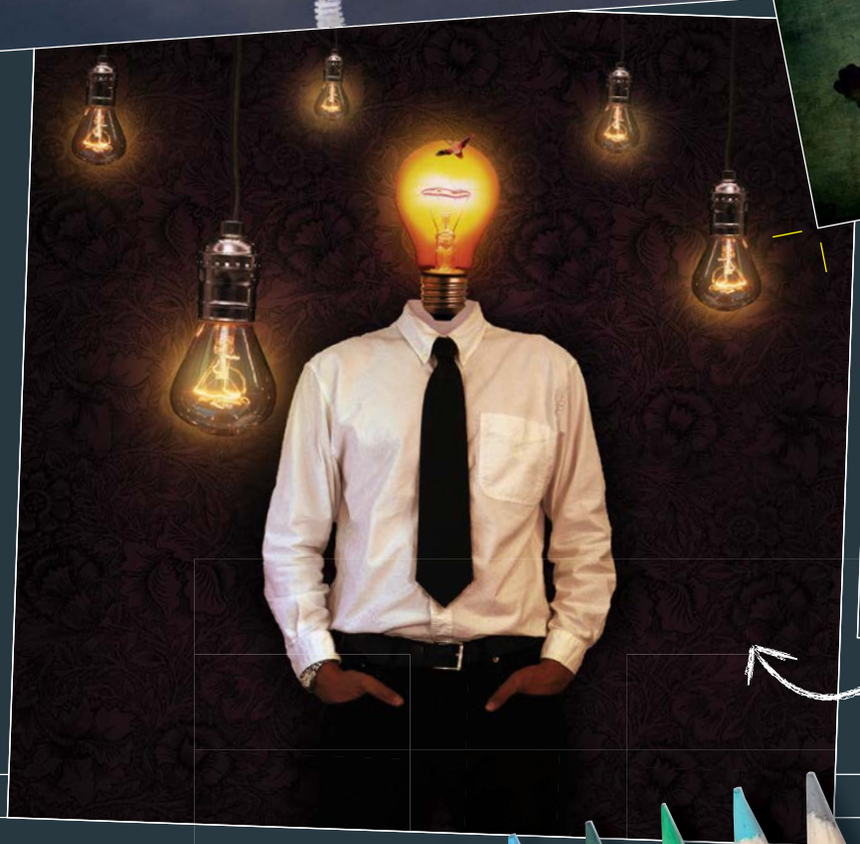
Paul Cook

See more at: www.photoshopcreative.co.uk/user/Paul Cook



God's House "This composite image was put together after being inspired by hearing the lyrics of *Head Rolls Off* by Frightened Rabbit. It comprises separate images for the house, clouds, sky, stairs and figure, with some additional processing and editing in CS5."

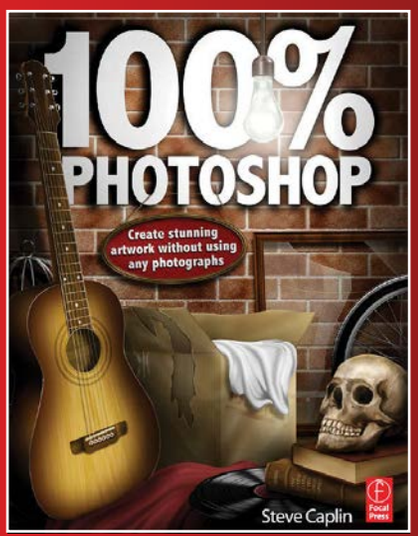
Metamorphosis – The Birth of a Fairy "Part of a series of themed images I created with the help of a friend who models for me showing the various stages of a fairy coming into life and her wings expanding. Shot in the studio against a plain background, with the wings, filters and textures added in CS5."



Looking On The Bright Side "Inspired by the concept that a light bulb appears when we get a good idea, I decided to play around with the theme and came up with a fun approach to it."

Inspire the artist in your life

Whether graphic art and photography are a profession or simply a passion, be inspired by the latest titles from Focal Press



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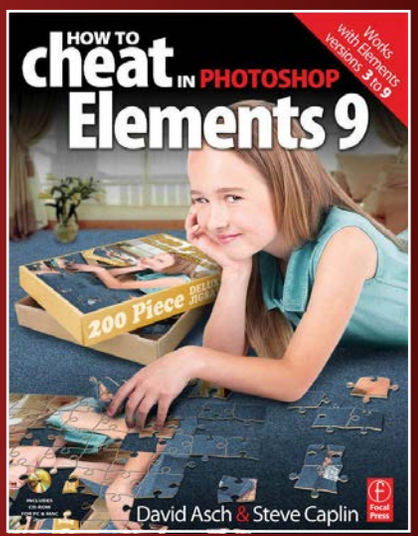

How to Cheat in Photoshop Elements 9
By David Asch and Steve Caplin
ISBN: 9780240522388
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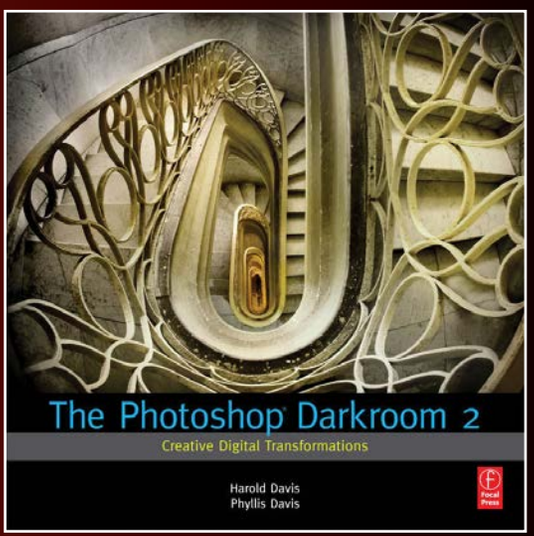
Photo montage for Elements – this fantastic handbook is full of step-by-step projects for you to put your creative skills to use in Photoshop Elements.



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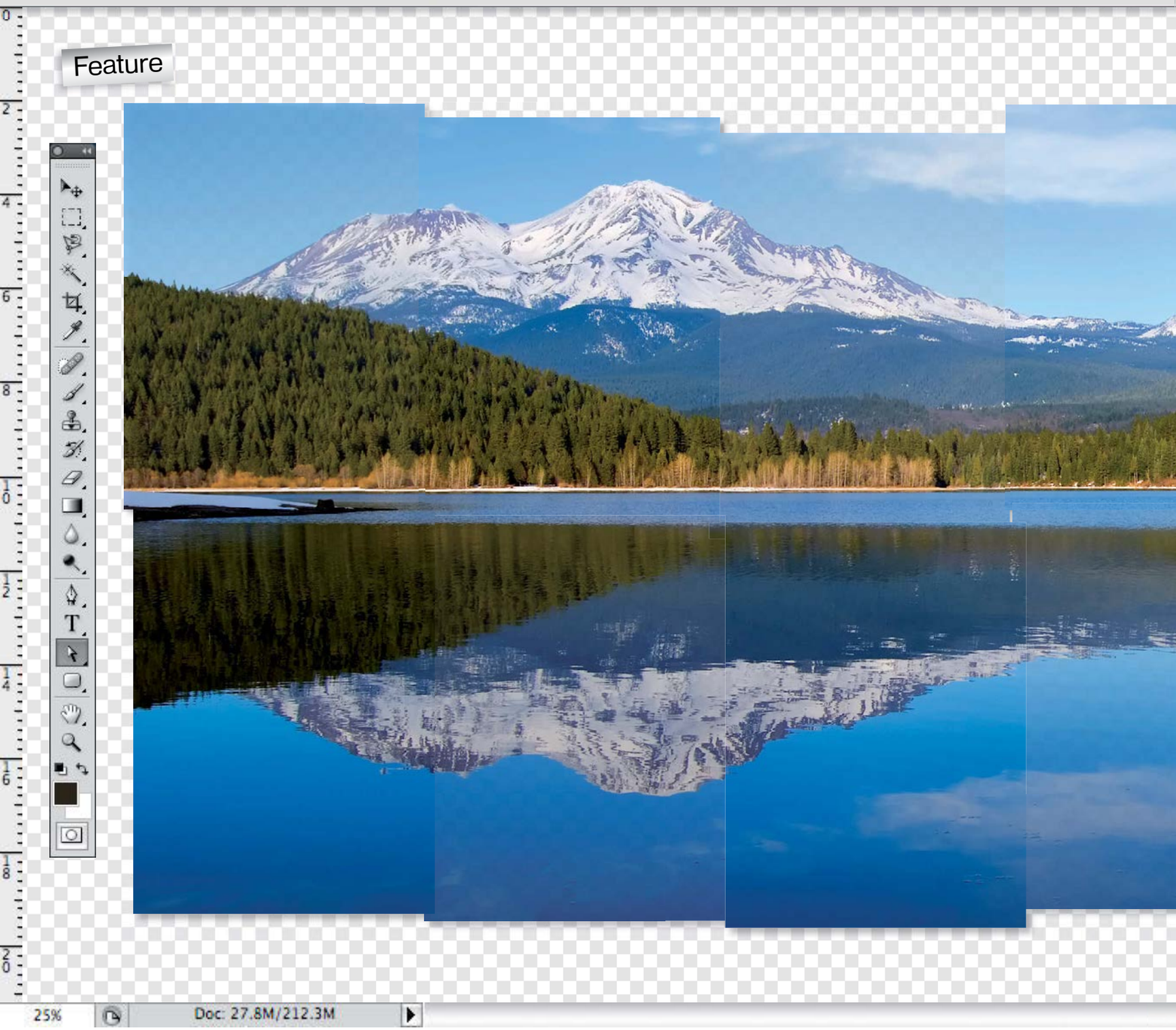


The art of making panoramas

How Photomerge can help you create your best-ever panoramic images

Not every subject naturally lends itself to the sweeping, grand style of a panoramic shot, but for those that do it can be one of the most effective photographic techniques available to you. They usually take the form of landscapes, enabling us to extend the vision beyond the peripheral to give a sometimes jaw-dropping view of the place we've been to show others. But panoramas don't have to be limited to landscapes, and they don't even have to be horizontal either.

Here we dive into the world of the panorama, taking you through what's involved in the process of shooting each image and then stitching them together to form an extended view. Photoshop has made our lives that much easier for creating these wondrous scenes, with Photomerge taking the helm. This feature, found under Automate, does all the thinking when it comes to merging images together, as all that's required of you is to shoot the images and retouch the final effect afterwards.

You can even take things one step further and get a bit more creative with the final stitch. Over the next few pages you'll find out how to turn a panoramic image into a planet shape as well as how to separate your panorama into pieces and achieve a tiled version of the effect.

If you ever have the opportunity to sweep your camera across a stunning view, landscape, cityscape, or otherwise, you'll find that the effort is well worth the final result; a memento that will continue to take your breath away.

Shooting a panorama

Take panoramas into your own hands using a DSLR or compact camera

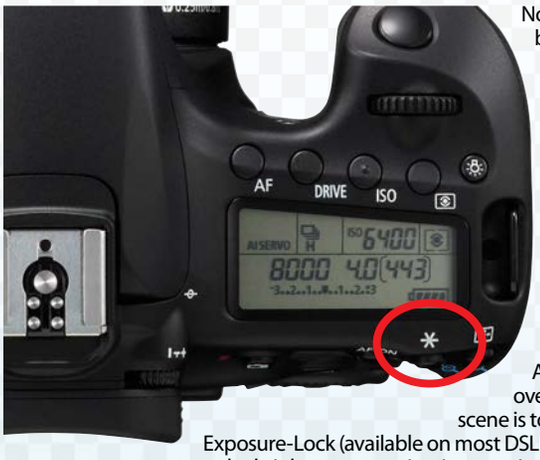
There's nothing quite as gratifying as shooting your own images to then turn into a panoramic composition. Whether it's the view from your back door, a vast landscape or a picture of a street scene, with the right equipment and a little know how, there isn't much to hold you back.

Here, we take you through the steps for setting up your camera, shooting each frame and importing the images into Photoshop ready to merge together. You can use either a DSLR or a compact camera; as long as there's plenty of overlap between each shot in your scene you'll be fine because Photoshop recognises each join and makes a stitch. Using a DSLR, however, will make sure the exposure throughout your panorama remains consistent, as well as keeping the focus and depth of field the same too.

"As long as there's plenty of overlap between each shot in your scene you'll be fine because Photoshop recognises each join"

Locking the exposure

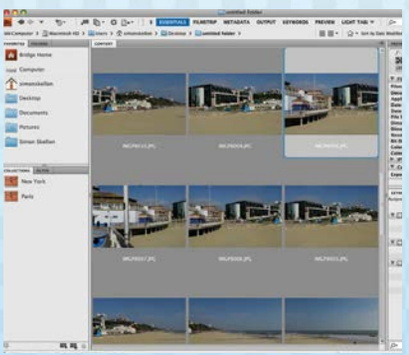
Work with difficult lighting to create stunning results



Not all views have perfect lighting, but there's a way around this if your camera allows it. Using a DSLR, for example, you can adjust the exposure settings to compensate for too much light through the lens. The shutter speed is going to be the one to adjust, and by speeding it up you can bring back details to the brighter parts of your scene. It's a good idea to use a tripod to keep your camera in one spot to move along the horizon. Another method for dealing with overly bright areas of the scene is to expose for a darker area. Use Exposure-Lock (available on most DSLRs) and point your camera back to the bright spot to maintain a consistent exposure setting.

01 Set up the camera If you're using a DSLR, choosing to shoot in Manual is the best option. Set it to manual focus to maintain an even focus throughout your scene. Using a high f-number such as f22, you can make sure your entire scene is focused. Set your shutter for the correct exposure and you're ready to shoot.

02 Compose your scene Using a tripod is highly recommended but not a necessity. A tripod with a panning head will make shooting a lot easier too. Allow for 30 - 50% overlap between each image, and shoot the scene twice if you need to with a different exposure. Using your camera's bracketing mode will give a broad choice of exposures.



03 Upload to Bridge After shooting the images you can preview the sequence using the features of Adobe Bridge. In Photoshop, go to File>Browse in Bridge. Here you can select the right images, go into Camera Raw to make exposure changes to all of the images at once, and then import them back into Photoshop ready for Photomerge.

Focusing advice

If you find using the manual focusing on a DSLR a bit of a hassle, switch to Auto and half press the shutter button to focus. Then switch back to manual focus and your lens is now set in one position that won't change halfway through the shooting of the panorama.

Photomerge explored

The starting point for all panoramas – here's what Photomerge is capable of

This is the next step in creating a panorama once you've captured your source images and have loaded them onto your computer. Photomerge is found under File>Automate and is what could be described as Photoshop's autopilot panorama mode.

Inside the menu you can choose from a number of Layout options and select the range of images you need to make the panorama. There are also additional options to choose for stitching together your sequence and improving the final results. Without Photomerge, the whole process would be much more difficult!

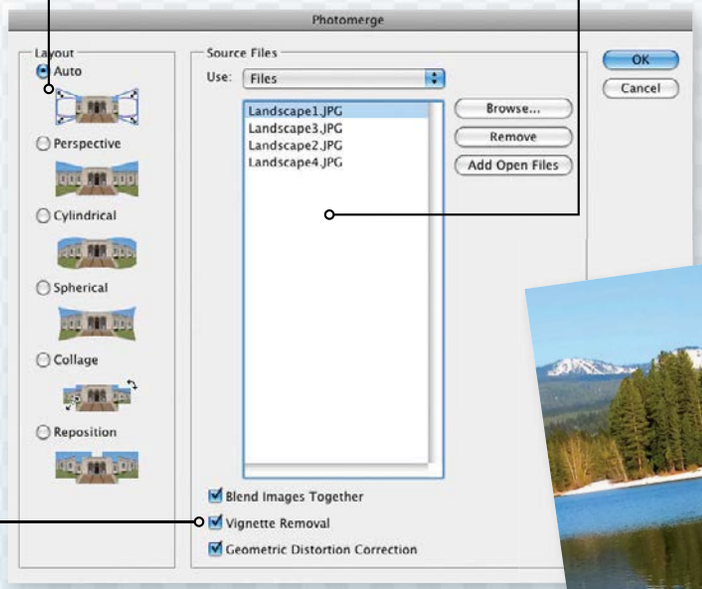
"There are additional options for stitching together your sequence and improving the final results. Without Photomerge, the whole process would be much more difficult!"

The Photomerge dialog

Choose the right settings for painless panoramas

The final look Layout options include Perspective, Cylindrical, Collage, Reposition and Spherical. These will change the way your images are manipulated to form the panorama. Leaving it set to Auto usually does a good job, but it depends on the angles in your scene.

Load images Under Source Files, either choose individual images or a folder. If you have your images open, simply click Add Open Files to insert them into the list. This will tell Photoshop which images to stitch together.



Cleanup options There are three options at the base of the Photomerge menu. The first decides whether to blend the images together, the second option makes sure a vignette doesn't appear around the corners of the panorama and the last corrects any distortion.

Compare the effects

We trial the different Photomerge Layout options

Auto
The safest option for making a panorama. However, in this case the mountains on the far right of our image have been stretched.

Spherical
Although the sky is flawless and the mountains look pretty perfect, the overall panorama has been bowed slightly in one direction.

Perspective
Adds a slight degree of distortion to the panorama to offset changing perspective. Unfortunately, not a great option for our example here.

Collage
Producing a similar effect to Spherical, the Collage option hasn't blended the mountains very well.

Cylindrical
This looks like the best option for our panorama, with no distortion and a perfect blend of the images. All that's left to do is a quick crop.

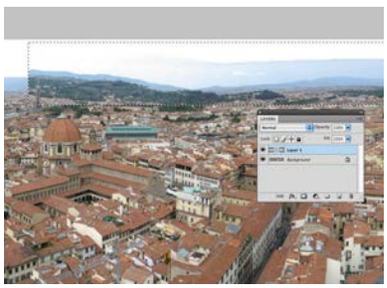
Reposition
Second best for this panorama, keeping hold of a true perspective and horizon line. Unfortunately, not all the areas have been stitched seamlessly.

The full 360

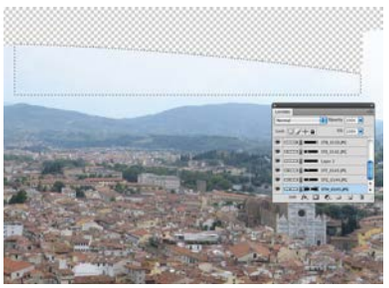
Here's how we retouched a 360-degree panorama after applying Photomerge

A panorama can extend across an entire skyline to show the full grandeur of the scene in front and behind you. The sheer scale involved can cause a couple of issues with stitching, however, and even Photomerge doesn't get it spot on. But it still produces a wonderful image, so once Photomerge has worked its magic and pieced together your panorama (there were 11 images used for this one), it's up to you to make the most of other Photoshop tools and get to work on making clever retouches to create a flawless amalgamation. Tools such as the Clone Stamp can work well to replace missing parts of your image, and using a selection with the Rectangular Marquee tool, you can copy and paste parts of one layer over the top of another.

This scene of the skyline of Florence required a bit of work to make a complete scene without any interruptions and to replace the odd brick and tile. Here are the tools and techniques that we put to good use to make it work.



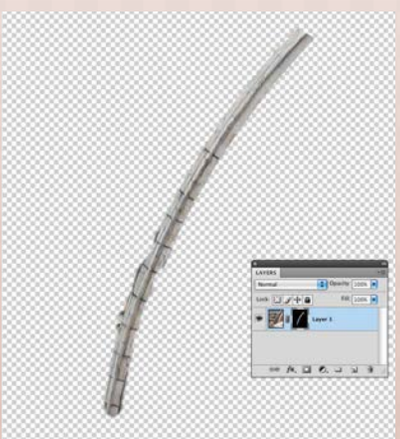
Move mountains The mountains on the left had their tops cut off. Flatten the panorama (Ctrl/Cmd+F) and, using the Rectangular Marquee tool, select a range of mountains from the other side. Go to Layer>New>Layer via Copy, flip the mountains and move them to cover the ones on the left. Use a soft round Eraser to blend them into their surroundings.



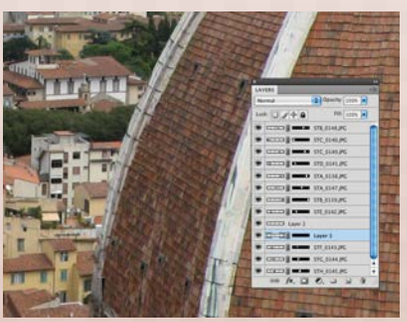
Extend the sky There wasn't much of a skyline after using Photomerge. To extend parts of the sky up, use the Rectangular Marquee tool to select a strip of the sky, go to Edit>Free Transform and enlarge upwards. You'll need to click on the layer mask's thumbnail and hit the Backspace key with the selection active.

A quick repair Mending the brickwork

01 Wonky results Photomerge had trouble lining up the vertical bricks on the dome part of the building. Open up the original image that has the entire line of grey bricks intact to use this as the replacement.



02 A new mask Make a selection along the grey bricks using the Quick Selection tool, and add a layer mask to hide the other areas. Drag this layer onto the main panorama over the top of where the line of bricks is wonky.



03 More tiles Begin to remove the broken bricks using the Brush tool on the mask of the offending layer. If the white canvas shows through, use the Clone Stamp tool with a low Hardness to copy and paste over the top.

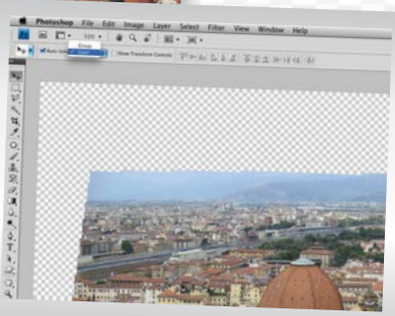
Setting up Photomerge

Photomerge does an impressive job of working it all out

In the Photomerge menu, make sure that Geometric Distortion Correction isn't ticked, and the same for Vignette Removal. Keep Layout set to Auto and make sure all 11 images are added to the Files list. Magically, Photomerge cuts an intricate divide through each image and matches them up with their correct neighbour. Doing this sort of panorama manually would no doubt be the cause of many headaches!

Identifying layers

With 11 layers stitched together, this can soon get complicated. To quickly figure out which layers are which in the palette, select the Move tool (V) and in the Options bar set to Auto-Select: Layer. Now, whenever a part of your panorama is clicked on with the Move tool, the corresponding layer is highlighted in the Layers palette.

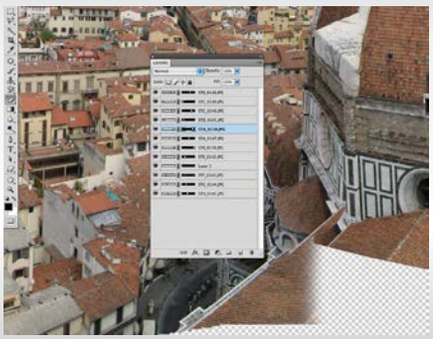


"Magically, Photomerge cuts an intricate divide through each image and matches them up with their correct neighbour"

Working with layer masks

Hide the ugly parts of the panorama using a strategic layer mask

Photomerge gives each layer its own mask after creating the panorama, which hides overlapping areas between each segment. When working on extending the skyline and moving some of the disjointed tiles into their correct positions, you may find they remain hidden. This is because the mask needs erasing to show the new areas. Use the Eraser tool on the mask to reveal these parts of your panorama.



Planet panorama

Create an abstract world using a panorama

This effect is easier than it looks and creates a brilliant result, using one of Photoshop's filters to spin your panorama around from tip to tip. Your panorama doesn't need to be a full 360, but it often works better if it is. Here we've used a panoramic cityscape that, once the horizon has been levelled, produces an interesting pattern. Tall buildings extrude from the middle, and water in the centre gives a warped effect, sucking in all the surroundings that are trying to escape.

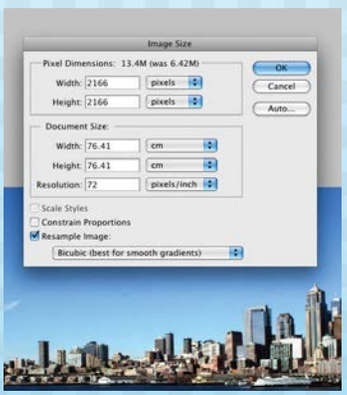
You can apply the filter to absolutely any image, as long as you flip it and increase its height. Defining features in your image give the overall effect more impact, such as tall buildings, which can also give the viewer a recognisable element that can't be mistaken for anything else.

Retouching the planet

After applying the Polar Coordinates filter there may be a subtle line showing where the two ends have met. To reduce this obvious join, select the Clone Stamp tool, set to 0% Hardness and Alt-click one bit of the sky nearby and stamp it onto the line. By lowering the Opacity of the tool and increasing its size you can create a softer blend to completely remove the look of the join.

01 Straighten horizon Open the image of the cityscape from your disc and double-click its layer to make it editable. Go to View>New Guide and insert a horizontal guide. Move it over the horizon line and Ctrl/Cmd+T to rotate the image level with the guide.

02 Crop image Use the Crop tool (C) to remove any exposed canvas that appears after the rotation, and place the cropping border between the buildings over the sky. As this is not a full 360 panorama, both of the two ends need to have blank sky to merge successfully.



03 Change dimensions Go to Image>Image Size, tick Resample Image and then deselect Constrain Proportions. Change the Height value to make it the same as the Width value for a perfectly square if very distorted image. But don't worry, this is a good thing!

04 Apply filter Under Image>Image Rotation, select 180 degrees to flip your skyline. To turn this upside-down, stretched image into a planet, head to Filter>Distort>Polar Coordinates. Set to Rectangular to Polar and hit OK to achieve the final effect.

A new angle

Take a different approach when composing panoramas

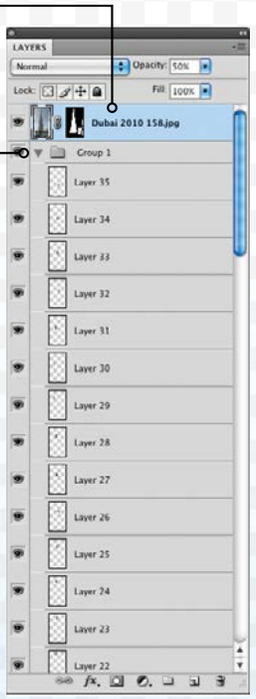
Panoramas can be described as an extension of the scene using many separate images, but there are no rules to say in which direction it should go. Here's an example of a vertical panorama, extending upwards to show the full, impressive reach of this towering building through the sky of Dubai.

Capturing the building in one image wouldn't have done it justice, but simply by taking a couple of shots with plenty of overlap as before, Photoshop can cleverly piece them together to give you a more face-on viewpoint and an idea of scale.

We have gone a bit further, however, with the use of a panographic effect, placing segments of the panorama onto their own layers and applying a blend mode so that they stand out and overlap.

"Panoramas can be described as an extension of the scene using many separate images, but there are no rules to say in which direction it should go"

The Pen tool To make the mask around the building we used the Pen tool for its smooth results. The tool creates a path, and by Ctrl/right-clicking inside the path and choosing Make Selection, you can then apply it as a layer mask.



Grouping layers After applying the action for each segment, it's a good idea to place them all into a Group in the Layers palette by clicking on the small folder icon at the bottom. The Group can be moved as a whole, or hidden using the eye icon next to its layer.

Double up The building has been selected and masked out from the rest of the image. It was then placed over the top with Opacity set to 50%. This makes the building stand out more against all the segments.

Tiled effect Each segment of the image has been copied and pasted onto a new layer and given the Multiply blend mode to make them appear effectively transparent.

Using the action

The action and images for this effect can be downloaded from your disc. When it comes to applying the action, make sure a Rectangular Marquee is made before hitting Play in the Actions palette (Window>Actions). When the action has been run, it's important to click back on the main image's layer before making another rectangle for the action.

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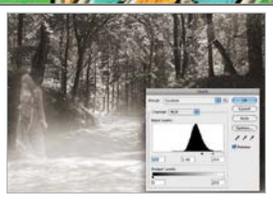

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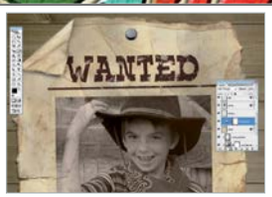

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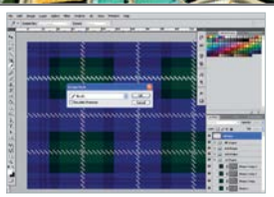

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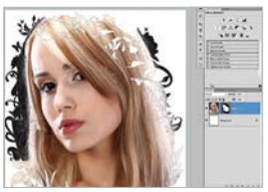

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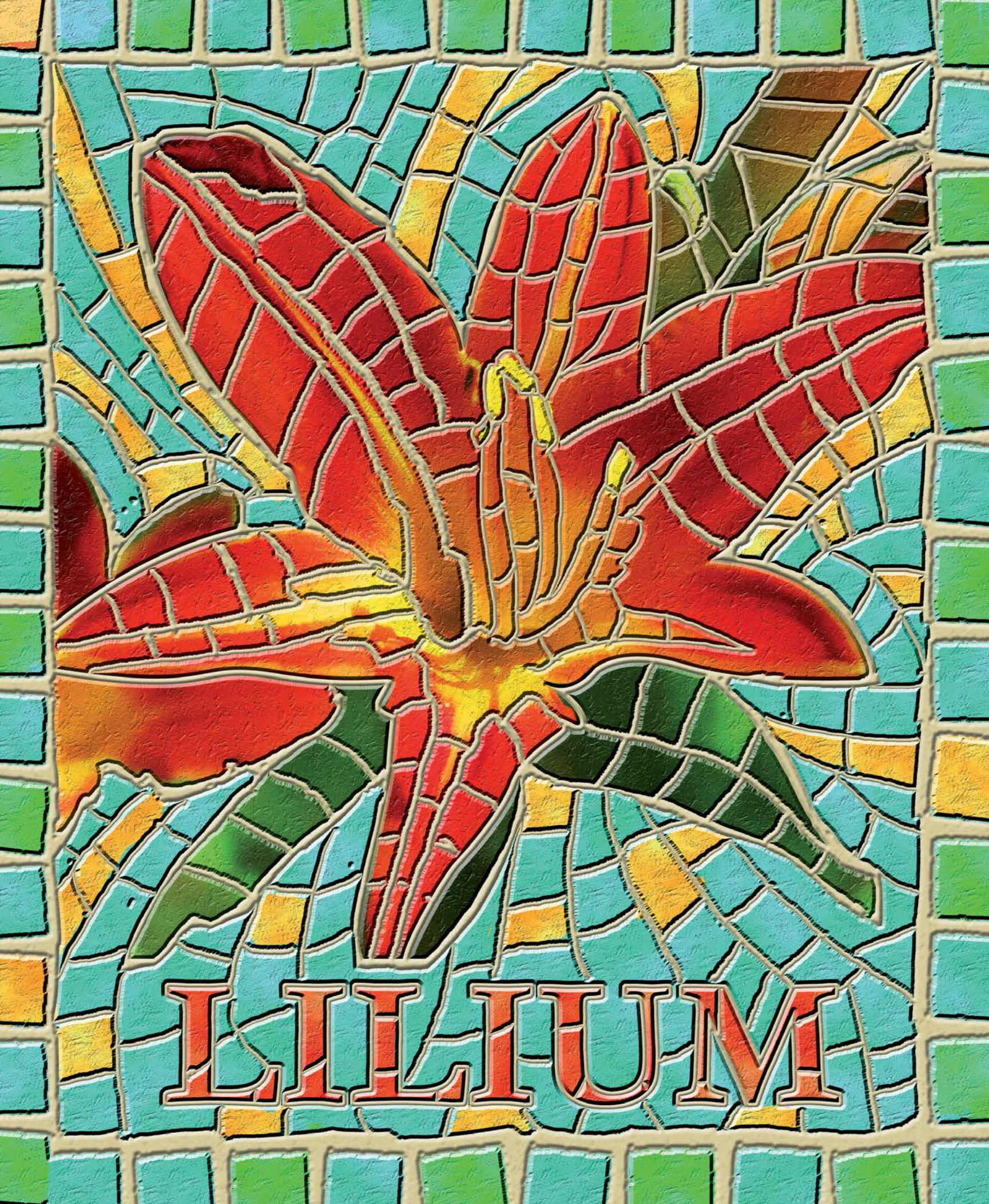
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Tim Shelbourne

ON THE DISC
mosaic start.jpg

Mosaic tile effect

With Photoshop at hand you don't need tile cutters and trowels to create a beautiful mosaic effect

The art of the mosaic has a proud history that stretches back thousands of years, and in this project we'll demonstrate that this fine artform is every bit as effective when you create it digitally, in Photoshop of course.

Using nothing more complicated than a couple of layer masks, some super-effective layer styles and a photographic source image to start off with, you can create a realistic, tactile, three-dimensional mosaic that any Roman would be proud of.

We'll also show you how to create a simple custom brush here to build individual tesserae within the mosaic itself and paint the grout lines in-between each fragment of tile within the design.

We'll start by simplifying the tone and detail within the start image, and then carefully use layer masks to isolate each component before manually painting all of the tiles and divisions within the design.

The key to the realistic effect here is the humble but brilliant Bevel and Emboss layer style, which adds that crucial extra dimension to the whole design, giving each tile a convincing three-dimensional appearance. It can create a surface so real you just want to reach out and touch it.

The best thing about this technique is that the whole process is non-destructive; you get the flexibility of being able to make unlimited edits that be undone if something goes awry, thanks to some clever use of the layer masking technique.

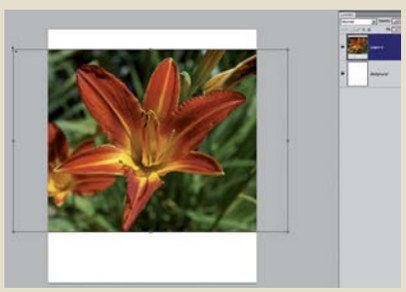
So, put away that tile cutter and trowel, fire up Photoshop and reach for the humble Brush tool and we'll get started!

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

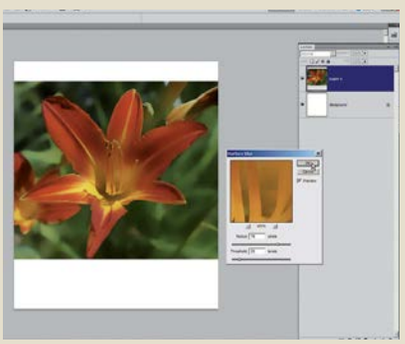
- LAYER STYLES
- LAYER MASKS
- CUSTOM BRUSHES
- TYPE TOOL
- ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

SET UP THE INITIAL DESIGN

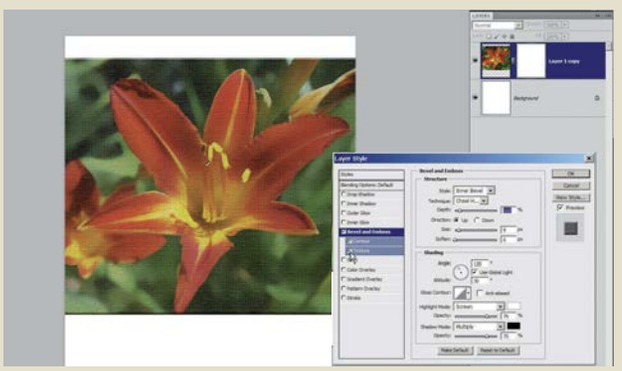
Start with a photographic source for a solid composition



01 **Paste the image** Go to File>New and create a canvas of 280mm by 230mm at 300dpi. Open the supplied flower image, then go to Select>All, followed by Edit>Copy. Return to your empty canvas and go to Edit>Paste. Go to Edit>Transform>Scale, hold down the Shift key and drag on the corner handles to size the flower and hit Enter to commit the transformation.



02 **Simplify and mask** Go to Filter>Blur>Surface Blur and use a Radius of 78 and a Threshold of 33. This will simplify the tones and detail in the source image. Hit Enter to apply the filter. We'll work on a mask, so go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All to add a white-filled layer mask.

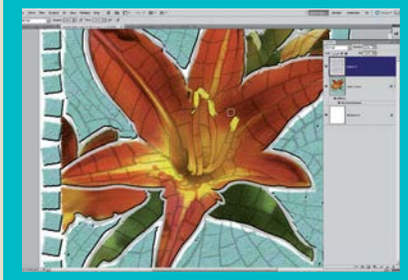


03 **Lovely layer styles** A layer style will provide the three-dimensional effect to emulate the look of tiles, so go to Layer>Layer Style>Bevel and Emboss. In Structure, choose the options of Inner Bevel and Chisel Hard. Set Depth to 113%, Size to 9 and Soften to Zero, then choose Up for Direction. Make sure to check Contour and Texture on the left-hand side of the Layer Style dialog as well.

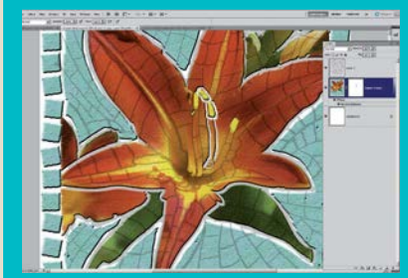
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE

SHAPE THE TILES

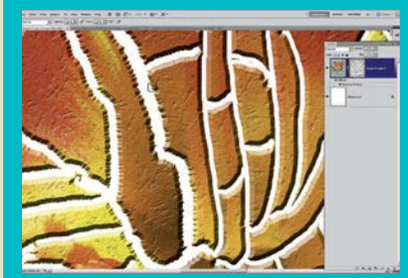
As you create your mosaic, you can use the Brush tool to sculpt individual tesserae and carve out grout lines, but the real power of this effect comes from the attached layer style.



Sketch out the lines It helps to sketch all of your grout lines on a separate layer with a small brush. You can keep this as a reference and delete it when you're finished.

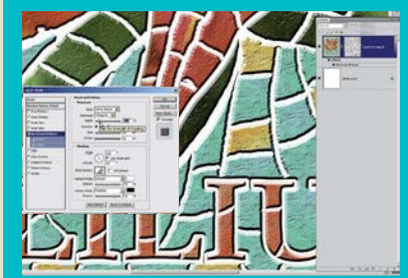


Paint in the grout Simply paint with black onto the layer mask to carve out those grout lines – no chisel required! Be try not to remove any important detail from your image.



Rough and ready Rough edges are good here, so don't be too careful with that brush. After all, tiles aren't always cut cleanly so a slightly jaggy effect can actually be an advantage.

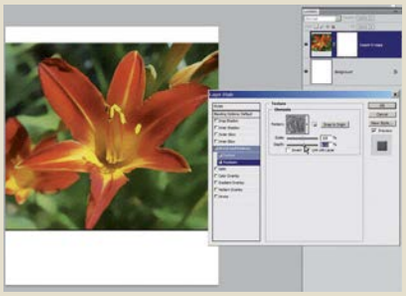
Clean up To erase a grout line that's gone astray, just paint back into the layer mask with white and then try again. With layer masks you can make these corrections easily.



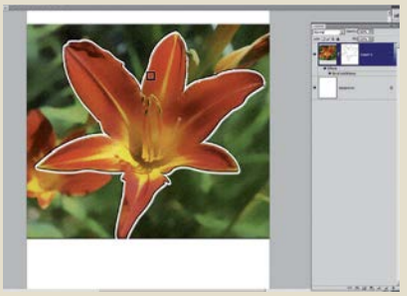
Enhance the effect Experiment with the Depth and Size settings in the Layer Style dialog to create thicker, heavier looking tiles, using higher settings for the larger ones.

IN THE CUT

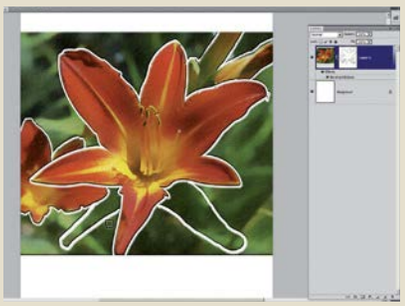
Isolate elements with the Brush tool



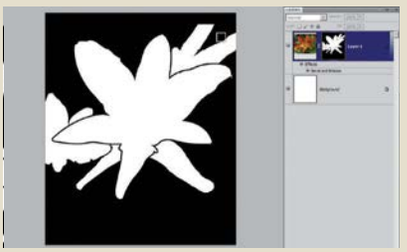
04 Add a texture Still in the Layer Style dialog, click directly on the word Texture. Click in the Texture swatch and load Rock Patterns via the small arrow in the top right of the Pattern Picker and choose the Black Marble swatch. Set the Scale to 100% and the depth to +18%. Click OK to apply.



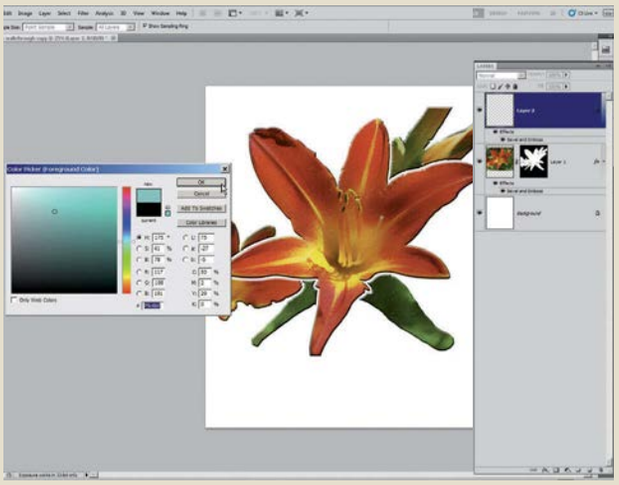
05 Reveal All Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Refer to the tip box to create your brush. With your custom brush active, click directly on the layer mask thumbnail in the Layers panel and, using the brush at around 20 pixels, paint with black around the outer edges of the main flower.



06 Chisel it out Now carefully paint around the outer edges of the second flower and the stems and flower buds in the top right. As shown in the screen shot, you can be a bit creative and shape some simple leaves beneath the flower using a basic outline for each within the green background.



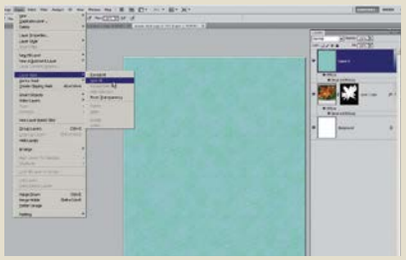
07 Hide with black Once you've completed these outlines, increase the size of the brush a little and paint with black over the unwanted background areas around the flower to hide them completely. It helps here to Alt-click the mask thumbnail and paint with black directly on the mask to ensure all the unwanted areas are covered, leaving just the white outlines of the central image.



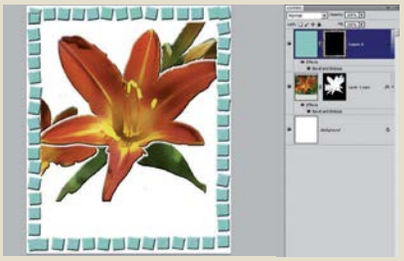
08 Paste the layer style Right-click this layer to the right of the layer mask thumbnail and choose Copy Layer Style. Add a new layer (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+N) then right-click this new layer and choose Paste Layer Style. Click the Foreground colour swatch and set the colour to the value #75c6bf.

BRING THE ELEMENTS TOGETHER

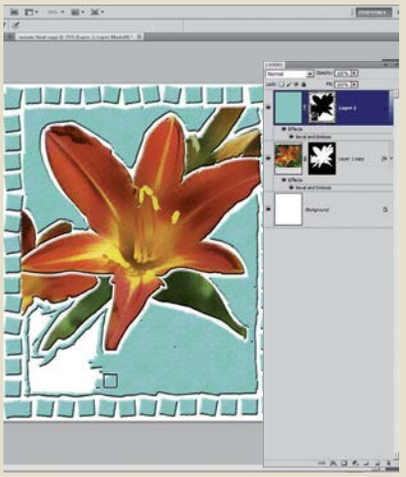
Simply brush for a complex pattern of individual tiles



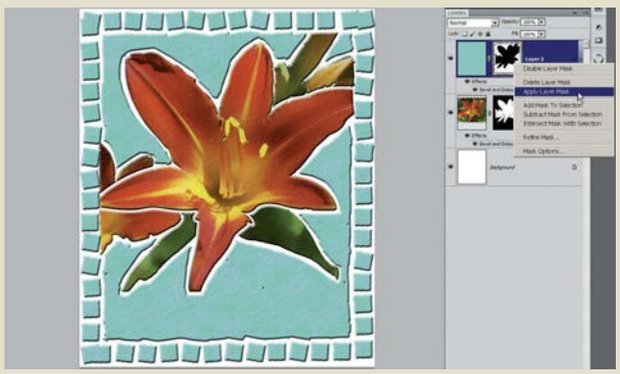
09 **Background fill** Now click the Background colour swatch and choose a blue-green colour. Fill this layer with these two colours by going to Filter>Render>Clouds. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All and then click directly on this layer mask in the Layers palette and make sure your Foreground colour is white.



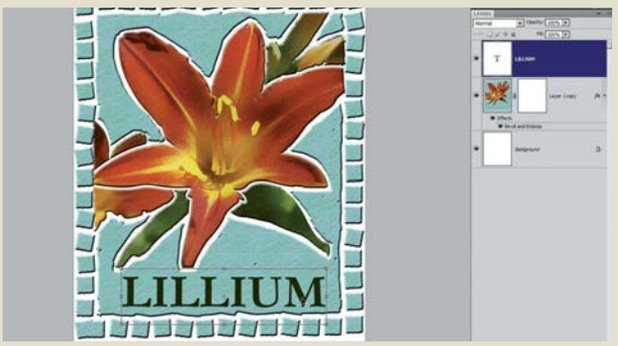
10 **Border tiles** Increase the size of the brush to 175 pixels, now add the border of tiles by using single clicks of the mouse to add the small tiles. Because of the angle jitter within the brush, each tile will be at a slightly different angle, introducing some nice variation. Add these tiles all around the outer edge of the mosaic to create a frame.



11 **Filling in** Reduce the brush to a much smaller size again now. Still using white, and still painting onto the layer mask, carefully paint to reveal the blue fill in the empty areas. Take care here to leave the grout gap around the flower elements and around the tiles that enclose the mosaic.



12 **Merge down** Once you've painted all of the surrounding blue tiles, right-click the layer mask thumbnail and choose Apply Layer Mask. Do the same with the layer mask on the flower image layer. Click on the blue tile layer and go to Layer>Merge Down to merge the two layers together, then go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All.



13 **Add some type** Choose the Type tool, click in the image and type the flower name (or whatever text you want), choosing a suitable font. Go to Edit>Transform>Scale and use the corner handles around the bounding box to scale the word. Position the type by dragging within the bounding box, hitting Enter to commit the transformation. Ctrl-click this layer to generate a selection from the type.

14 **Stroke a gap** Hide this type layer via its visibility eye. Now click directly on the white layer mask on the main mosaic layer. Go to Edit>Stroke. Enter 13px for Width and choose Center for Location. Choose Black for the Foreground colour. Now go to Select>Deselect. Return to the Brush tool, setting the size of the brush to around 13 pixels and ensuring that your Foreground colour is still black.

15 **Paint in the grout** Refer to the 'Shape the tiles' panel on the facing page and take your time painting in the grout lines between all of the tesserae in the mosaic. Because of the layer style applied to this layer, as you create the divisions between the tiles with the brush, each tile will take on a three-dimensional appearance.

Tip

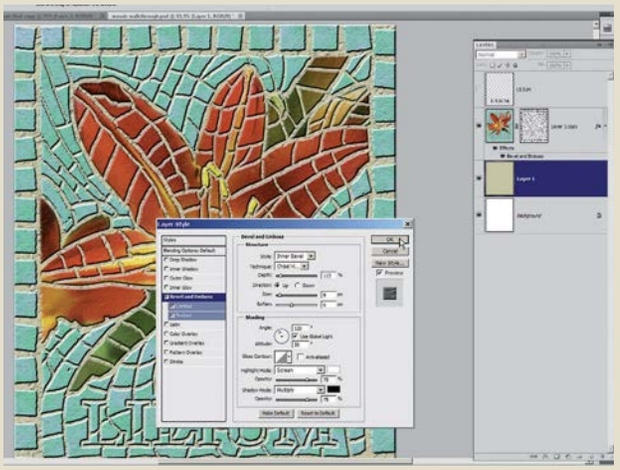
Create the custom brush

Create a new file 200 x 200 pixels, then use the Rectangular Marquee tool to create a square selection. Fill this selection with black via Edit>Fill. Use a small brush with white to break into the edges a little. Go to Select>All, followed by Define Brushes Preset. To use the brush, in the Brush palette set Spacing to 1%. In Shape Dynamics set Size Control to Pen Pressure and Angle Jitter to 3%.

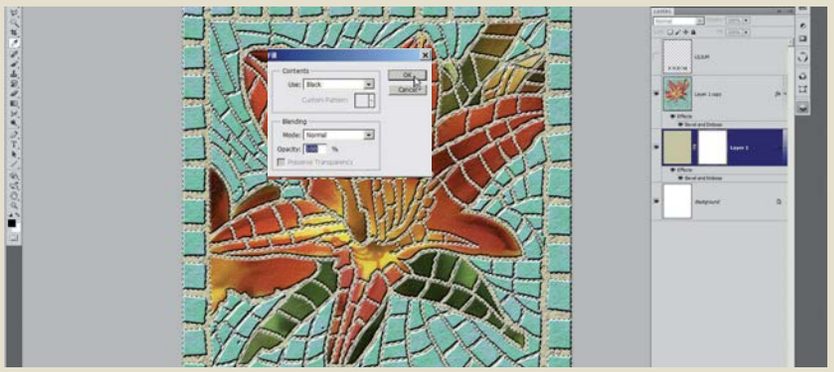
COLOUR THE GROUT AND FINISH WITH FLAIR

Use layer styles and more masking to complete the effect

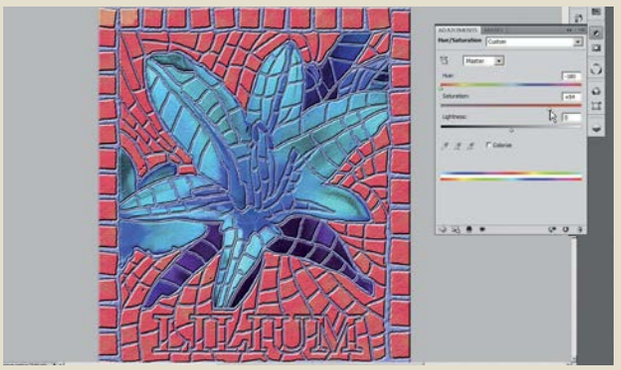
16 Grout layer Once all the grout lines have been added, right-click the mask and choose Apply Layer Mask. Click on the white-filled layer and add a new one (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+N). Click the Foreground colour swatch and choose the colour #d3caa5. Go to Edit>Fill, choosing Foreground Color for Contents.



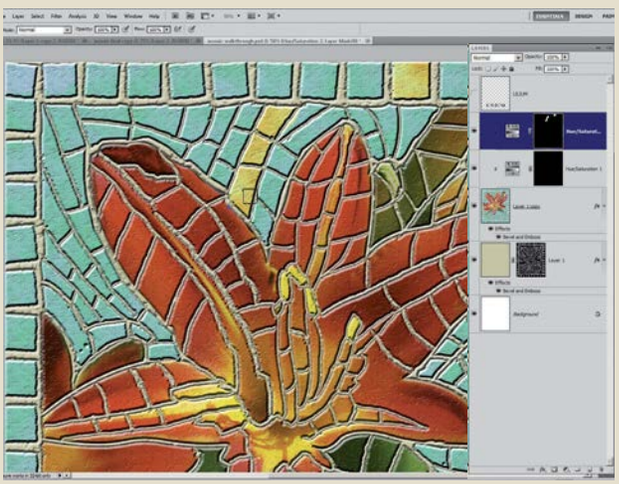
17 Another layer style Go to Layer>Layer Style>Bevel and Emboss. Choose Inner Bevel for Style and Chisel Hard. Set Depth to 113%, Direction to Up, Size 9px and Soften 6px. On the left-hand side of the dialog, check Contour then click on Texture. Set the Texture to the same Black Marble texture settings as in the previous layer style.



18 Emphatic embossing Next, we need to give the grouting itself an embossed look. Still on the filled layer, go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Click directly on the layer mask thumbnail and then Ctrl/right-click the layer thumbnail for the mosaic layer to generate a selection. Still targeting the layer mask, with the selection active, go to Edit>Fill, choosing Black for Contents. This will hide the tiled areas on this layer, creating the embossed effect for the grout.



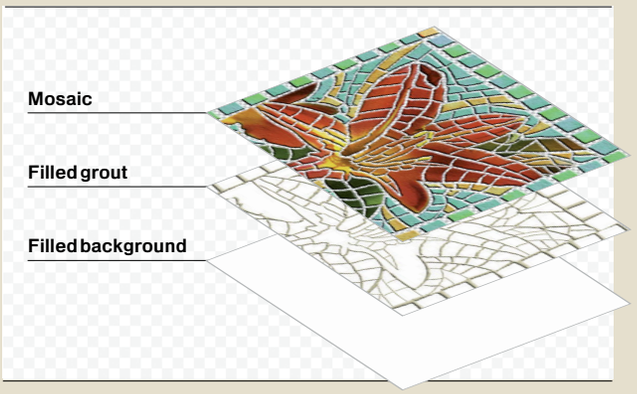
19 Text colour To make the type stand out, click on the top layer in the stack and go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Adjust the Hue and Saturation slider to choose a colour for the lettering. Fill the layer mask on this layer with black and paint with white to reveal the hue just over the lettering.



20 A little variation You can add additional Hue/Saturation layers to create another colour for some tiles in the mosaic. Once again, fill the mask with black and paint with white to reveal the colour over a few tiles.

Layer structure

Emulate the effect



1&1 WEB HOSTING

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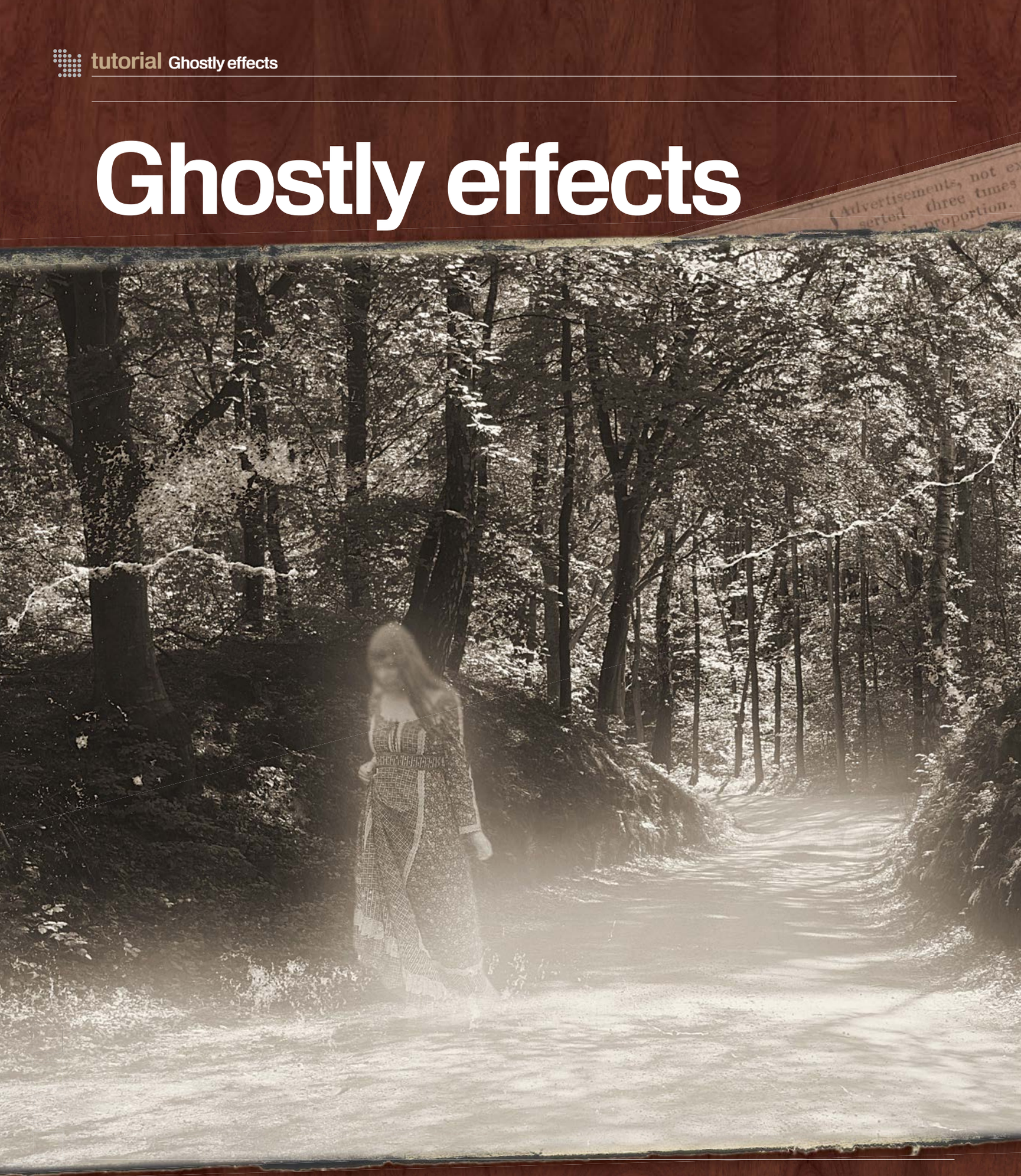
Ghostly effects



We show you how to turn two stock images into an aged and faded photograph with a ghostly presence. It's enough to send a chill down your spine

We've often wondered how a ghost might look inside an old photograph. Trying to avoid the cliché, person-in-a-bed sheet ghost, we've opted for keeping the figure of our ghost fairly recognisable. With the help of a misty glow and a sepia effect, we can make our photo look as old as a hundred years or more.

Quietly sauntering down a glowing, ethereal woodland road, our spectre has been cut out from a separate image and placed fittingly into the scene. You can access the image of the woman from **www.sxc.hu** using the image ID 276738. Once a selection has been made using one of Photoshop's selection methods (the Quick Selection tool was our choice here), you can go ahead and blend her in using different layer styles for her glowing aura.

The blurred surface of the road enhances the ghostly nature of this effect. Although this is not genuine mist, using the techniques covered in our steps you can create a sense of fog in and around the trees in the rest of the picture. To make the photo seem aged and worn, we've used one of our textures, available on your disc, and overlayed it on top. The edges of the canvas were expanded and a slight brownish tint was added using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer for further discolouration and to complete the aged look.

Whether you're a believer in the existence of ghosts or not, creating them in Photoshop is easily achieved with a little creativity and imagination.

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

1.5 hours

YOUR EXPERT

Simon Skellon

ON THE DISC

Background.psd (courtesy of Lars Sundström, **www.sxc.hu/profile/sundstrom**)
Dodgywall.tif

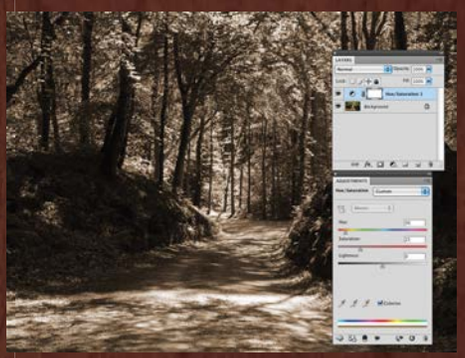
KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- LAYER STYLES
- BLEND MODES
- LEVELS ADJUSTMENT
- BLUR TOOL
- SELECTION METHODS

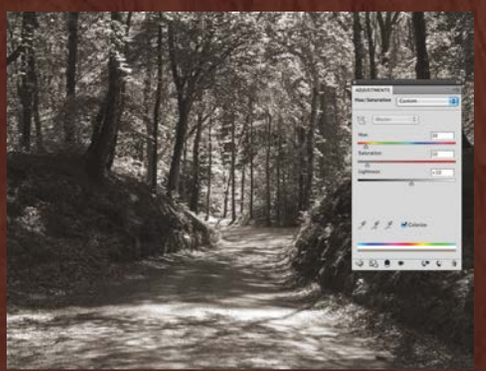
RE-CREATE THE EFFECTS OF TIME

Apply a sepia tone for the aged photo look



01 **The sepia tone** Open the image of the road to start, 'Background.psd'. To create the sepia tone, add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer in the Layers palette and in the adjustments menu tick the Colorize option. Reduce the Hue slider down to 30 for a brown, sepia tint.

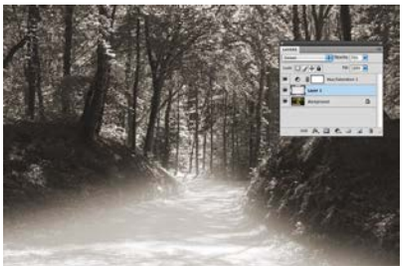
02 **Adjust the strength** With the Hue/Saturation menu still open, set the Saturation slider to 10 to soften the effect. Boost the Lightness slider to +10 to make the photo seem faded and old. We'll increase the overall colour later on.



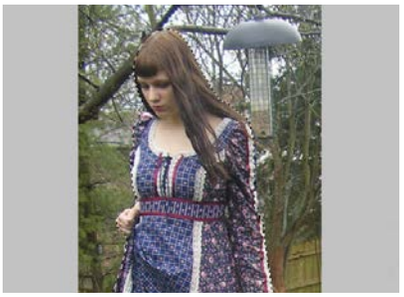
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

FROM THE MIST...

Our ghost is created using blend modes, layer styles and a nifty selection



03 Mist-erious Make a new layer below the Hue/Saturation adjustment and set its blend mode to Screen. Next, you need to select a soft round brush and lower its Opacity to 50% in the Options bar. Use a Diameter of 750px to paint on top of the road to form the misty glow. Lower the Opacity of the layer to 70%.



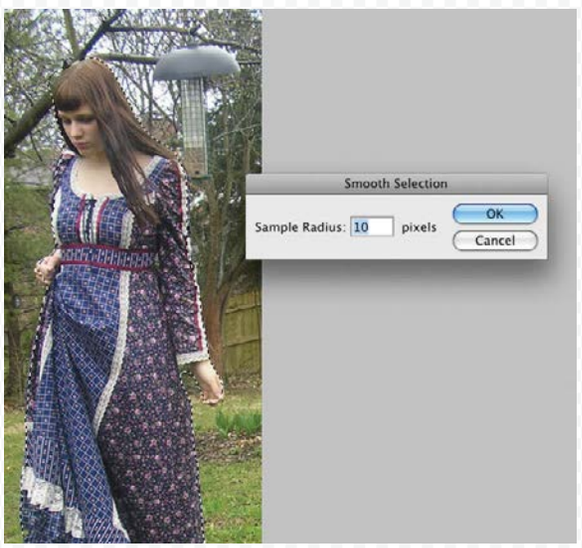
04 Select the woman Download the image of the woman and choose the Quick Selection tool (or Magic Wand as an alternative). Select Auto-Enhance in the Options bar and select the woman from the background. Open up the Refine Edge menu in the Options bar (or use Select>Modify).

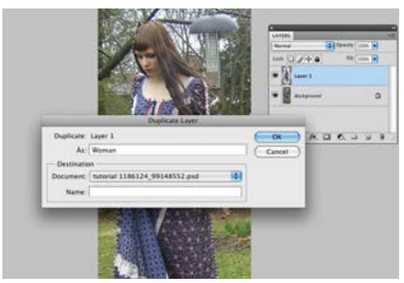
05 Soften selection Increase Smooth to 77, Feather to 3.8px, Contrast to 12% and Radius to 3.8px in the Refine Edge menu. Use the white preview mask in this menu to see the edges of the selection around the woman. The selection should be soft and blurry.

No Refine Edge?

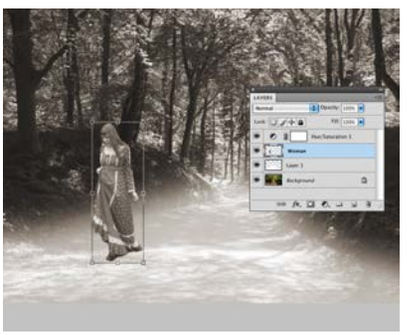
Modifying your selection

If you own a version of Photoshop that doesn't have the Refine Edge command, there are alternatives in the Select menu, under Modify. Here you can use the Expand and Contract adjustments to make the selection bigger or smaller, or the Feather and Smooth options to fade the edges and remove any sharp points that can sometimes form around a subject. The Refine Edge command makes the post-selection editing process much easier, with more options available to edit and form the perfect cut-out. There are also a number of masking previews to show you what's happening, but with a little trial and error, users of everything up to CS2 can also achieve the desired effect.

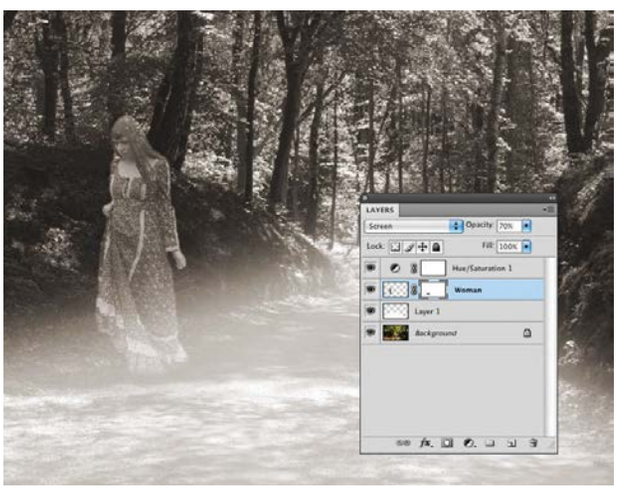




06 Transfer to main image When you're happy with the selection you've made around the subject, go to Layer>New>Layer via Copy (Ctrl/Cmd+J). Then go to Layer>Duplicate Layer, and in the pop-up menu choose the start image in the Document box under Destination. Hit OK and go back to the start image.



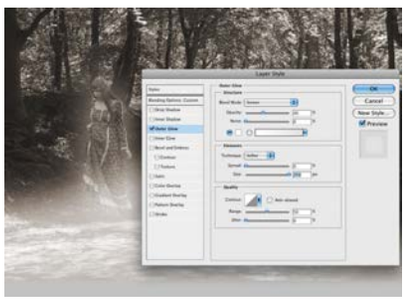
07 Resize model A new layer should now be visible containing our model in the start image. Hit Ctrl/Cmd+T to open the transform bounding box, and resize the woman by dragging the markers so she looks a normal size in the foreground on the road.



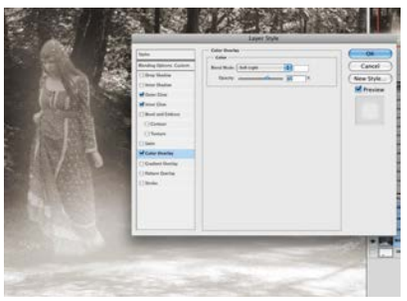
08 Boo! Change the blending mode of the woman to Screen and lower the layer's Opacity to 70%. This forms our ghostly figure. To hide the feet of the ghost, add a layer mask and then use the Brush tool set to black to paint them away.

BREATHE LIFE INTO YOUR PHANTOM

Use layer styles for a glowing outline and finish with a texture



09 **Apply a glow** Double-click the ghost's layer, and in the Layer Style menu click on Outer Glow. Set its mode to Screen, Opacity to 40% and choose white for the colour. Set Technique to Softer, Spread to 0% and Size to 250px. This adds a subtle glow to our figure, enhancing the ghostly effect.



10 **Add more styles** Next, apply a white Inner Glow set to Screen with Opacity at 20%. Set Choke to 0% and Size to 90px. Select the Softer and Edge options. Now apply the Color Overlay option set to white, Soft Light, and with an Opacity of 65%. This will make our ghost glow even more.

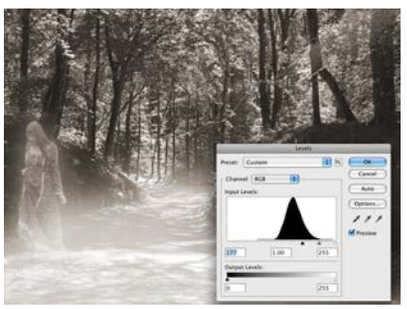
11 **Blur face** To blur the face of our ghost, select the Blur tool and set its Strength to 100% in the Options bar. Make sure the Sample All Layers option is not ticked, and set the size of the tool so that it's just a bit larger than the head. Begin to blur the face.

Tip

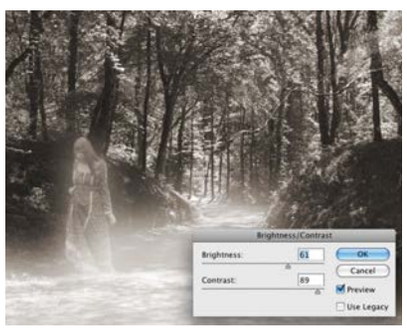
Adjustment layers

The best thing about using adjustment layers is that they can be tweaked at any point. Double-click on the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and try different looks. Increase the Lightness value for a faded effect, or further saturate the image with a colour by boosting the appropriate slider.

12 **Enrich with texture** Open up the texture provided on your disc ('Dodgywall.tif') and drag and drop it onto the main image under the Hue/Saturation layer. Set its blend mode to Screen to make it turn see-through, then resize the texture to fit over your entire image using Ctrl/Cmd+T.



13 **Adjust the levels** Press Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the highlights and shadows of the texture and go to Image> Adjustments>Levels. In the adjustment menu, move the black arrow under the histogram to the right until the foggy texture disappears, leaving just the white cracks visible.

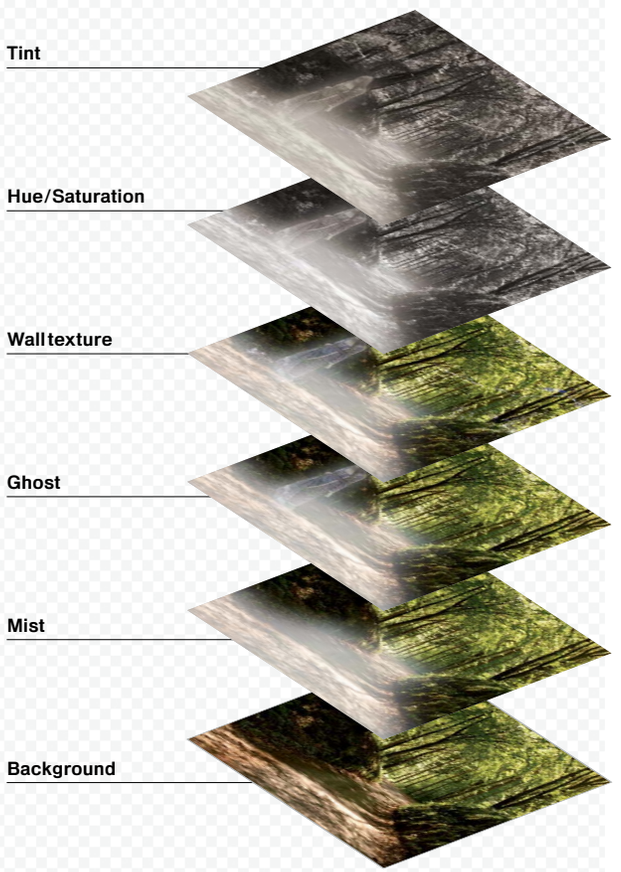


14 **Boost highlights** The texture is still quite flat, so go to Image> Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast. Boost the Brightness value to 60 and the Contrast value to 90. Make sure Preview is ticked and adjust the settings for maximum punch.

15 **Tint the photo** Go to Image>Canvas Size and increase the size by 1cm for both width and height. Create a new layer at the top of the Layers palette and go to Edit>Fill. Select Color and enter the colour number of 9d7005. Hit OK and change the blend mode to Multiply. Lower the layer's Opacity to 10% to complete the effect.

Layer structure

The ghost in the machine



The Channel Mixer

Carry out creative colour adjustments or dynamic black and white conversions with a little channel mixing

Working with the Channel Mixer allows you to control how much each colour channel affects an image. One of the ways it can be used is as an adjustment layer, which means changes are carried out separately and the original image is preserved. The other, more risky way, is to choose Image>Adjustments> Channel Mixer. When using this method you should be cautious as changes are applied directly to the image. The Channel Mixer comes into its own when producing dynamic black and white conversions of colour photographs. Instead of a flat final image that has little tonality, each of the output sliders is adjusted to add more depth. However, it is not just black and white conversions that the Channel Mixer excels at. Once you are comfortable working with the output and source channels, you can carry out a range of creative colour adjustments and tinting effects. For example, if an image needs warming up then choose the Red output channel, boost the Red Source Channels slider and bring down the Blue one slightly. It is also useful to remember the 100% rule that many image editors follow when making adjustments in the Channel Mixer. This means that the sum of all of the source channels should be around 100%. Photoshop even tallies this up for you so if the total is above 100 a warning symbol will appear next to the Total value.

Monochrome magic

You can carry out black and white conversions quickly with the Channel Mixer by getting to grips with the Monochrome setting and output sliders.

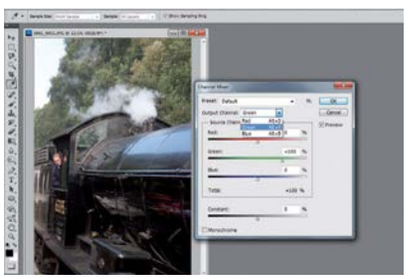
01 Choose the Channel Mixer
Choose Image> Adjustments>Channel Mixer. If you have CS4 or CS5 you can also go to Window>Adjustments and then click on the Channel Mixer icon. This will make non-destructive changes.

02 Slider settings
Check the Monochrome box to remove the colour from the image. You will only be able to choose Gray from the Output Channel menu. You can now adjust the different Source Channels sliders.

03 Aim for 100%
When carrying out black and white conversions, make sure the total of the three channels is 100%. Start by setting the Red slider to 70% and then adjust the Green and Blue sliders until the total is near or at 100%.

Working with output channels

Adjust each output channel independently



When using the Channel Mixer, you will be making changes to one output colour channel at a time by selecting them using the Output Channel drop-down menu. The different output channels available will depend on whether the image is in RGB or CMYK mode. For example, if the image is in RGB mode, the Output Channel drop-down menu will display Red, Green or Blue channels. Think of each channel as a greyscale image that, when chosen from the drop-down menu, displays the tonal values of the colour components in a photograph. By adjusting the sliders in the Source Channels area, greyscale data is being added to or removed from that channel.

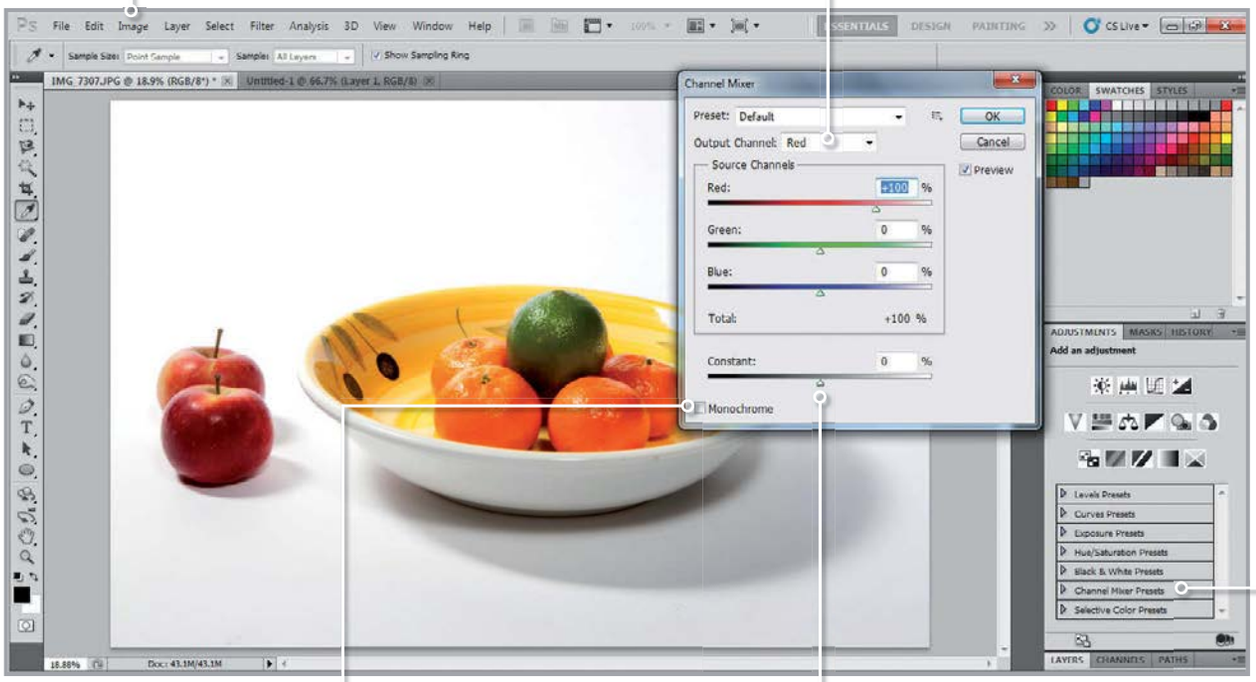
Getting to the source

Add or remove greyscale data

Any changes made to the source channels have an impact on the channel that is currently selected in the Output Channel drop-down menu. When an output channel is chosen, the corresponding source channel in the area below will automatically be set to 100% and the other two will be set to 0%. So if Red is selected in the Output Channel menu, in the Source Channels area Red will be 100% and Green and Blue will both be at 0%. However, these values can then be changed using the sliders.

Alternative to adjustment layers As well as creating a Channel Mixer adjustment layer by clicking the icon in the Adjustments panel, it can be accessed by choosing Image>Adjustments>Channel Mixer. Remember that this will make direct changes to the image instead of on a separate adjustment layer.

Select the output channel to adjust To choose the channel in which you want to blend one or more of the other channels, select it from the Output Channel drop-down menu. The influence of each colour on the chosen channel can then be adjusted using the sliders or by entering values.



Transform to black and white The Monochrome box is checked when you are using the Channel Mixer to create a black and white image. All of the colours will be removed from the image when the box is checked leaving you with a black and white version that you can adjust by moving the Source Channels sliders.

Overall adjustment By dragging the Constant slider, you can lighten or darken the image. It is also worth noting that any settings you want to use again can be saved as presets by clicking the Preset options icon. These settings can then be loaded up and used again from the same place.

Channel Mixer adjustment layer The Channel Mixer can be quickly accessed within the Adjustments panel. If this is not visible in the Photoshop workspace, bring it up by choosing Windows>Adjustments. Clicking on the Channel Mixer icon will create a new Channel Mixer adjustment layer that means your original image will be kept separate.

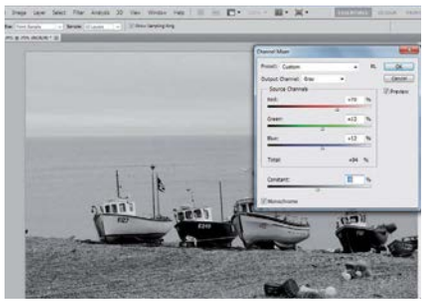
Tip

Save your favourite settings

If you are applying the same settings to multiple images they can be saved as a preset by clicking the Preset options icon. These can be loaded again by selecting Load preset from the drop-down menu.

Monochrome options

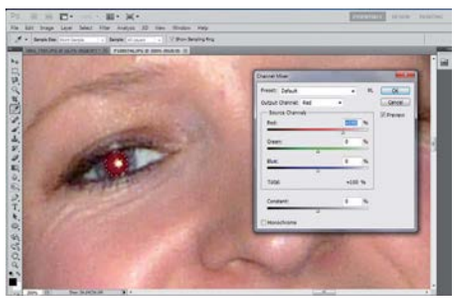
Produce powerful black and white conversions



Making use of the Monochrome option within the Channel Mixer is an effective way of creating black and white images from colour photographs. You will notice that with the Monochrome box checked, only the Gray channel is displayed in the drop-down menu as you are working with a greyscale image. However, the best result is not produced by simply checking this box. After all, the colour is removed from the photograph, so a far more dynamic image can be produced by adjusting the sliders for each of the source channels too.

Removing unwanted colours

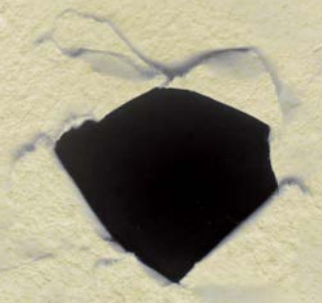
Quickly resolve red eye issues



The Channel Mixer can be put to good use if you wish to remove unwanted areas of colour, such as red eye, from a photograph. Before bringing up the Channel Mixer window, use the Magic Wand tool with a tolerance of around 32 to select the red eye area. Hold the Shift key and click to select the red area in the other eye. Now load up the Channel Mixer and adjust the Red source channel for the Red output channel using the slider.

WANTED
FOR CRIMES AGAINST
ROOM TIDINESS
REWARD: £1000

Create your own wanted poster



Put your outlaws to shame with this authentic western-style wanted poster

Fed up with people thinking they can wantonly break the laws of the household and get away with it? Bring them to justice by exposing their crimes with your very own wanted poster. With the correct reward on offer it can not only be fun but practical too; someone is sure to snitch with the prospect of a chocolate-based reward on the cards.

Most of the files needed to complete this tutorial can be found on the CD, except for the mug shot photo. You'll probably have plenty of potential candidates whose heinous crimes can't possibly go unpunished, but if you'd like to use the same photo featured in this tutorial it can be downloaded from Stock.XCHNG at **www.sxc.hu/photo/557271**. The western-style font can be downloaded from Font Squirrel at **www.fontsquirrel.com/fonts/Edmunds**. We've used the distressed version of this in our project.

Why not revisit your childhood and indulge in a bit of nostalgia by making your own aged paper to scan and use in Photoshop? Or if you don't fancy getting your hands dirty (oh go on, it's good fun!) we've included a paper texture for you on the CD. It's been artificially aged using the good old tea bag staining method, with some strategic tearing and crumpling to make it look nice and tattered.

We'll be putting Photoshop's many tools and functions to good use. Gradients, layer styles, Gaussian blurs, blending modes and much more will all be needed to aid you in your worthy crime-fighting cause. So put on your Stetson and let's get to work.

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
1 hour

YOUR EXPERT
Sarah and David Cousens

ON THE DISC
aged paper.jpg
weathered wall.jpg
nail.jpg
distress.abr

KEY SKILLS COVERED

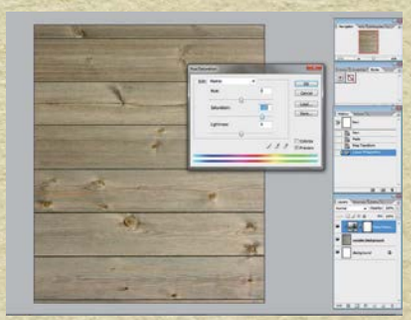
What you'll learn

- BLENDING MODES
- LAYER MASKS
- GROUPING LAYERS
- LAYER STYLES
- COLOR OVERLAY
- GRADIENT TOOL

CREATE THE BACKGROUND

Use gradients and Hue/Saturation to edit your background image

01 Create your canvas Open a new document, 240mm wide by 290mm high and 300dpi. Next, open the 'weathered wall.jpg' stock image and press Ctrl/Cmd+A, Ctrl/Cmd+C to copy and paste it into your canvas with Ctrl/Cmd+V. Name the layer Wooden background. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T, right-click and click Rotate 90 CW, dragging the corners to make it fit your artwork.



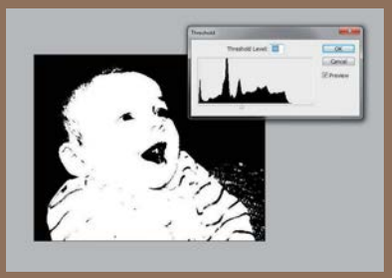
02 Adjust the saturation Hold Alt while clicking the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette (the black and white circle), choose Hue/Saturation from the fly-out menu and tick the Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask button in the window that opens. Increase the Saturation to +65 and click OK.

03 Add a gradients layer The next step is to add a new layer (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+N), name it Wood gradients and tick the Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask box to clip it to the wooden texture layer. Change the blending mode to Color Burn in the Layers palette at an Opacity of 60%. Choose the Gradient tool, set to Foreground to Transparent and select an Opacity of 33%.

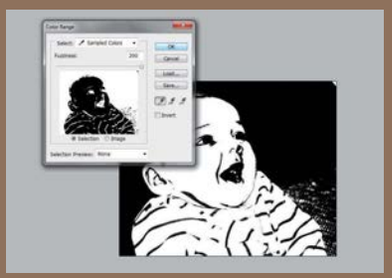
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS2 AND ABOVE

STYLISE YOUR MUG SHOT

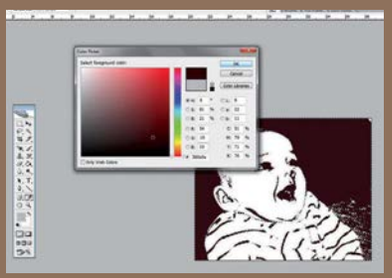
As an alternative to a photographic mug shot, why not give your poster a more old-fashioned feel. Follow this quick and easy guide to create a two-tone sketch and place it in your poster.



Black and white Go to Image> Adjustments> Threshold. Adjust the slider to get the desired level of detail (this varies with every photo, so use your own judgement here).



Select the black The next step for this image is to go to Select>Color Range and click on just the black area of your photo. Then, Press Ctrl/Cmd+N to create a new layer.



Seeing red Use the Paint Bucket tool (press G) to fill the selected area with a colour of R:54 G:10 B:10. This will give your solid black a softer tone to blend with the poster's sepia.

Copy and paste Press Ctrl/Cmd+A to select the canvas, then copy (Ctrl/Cmd+C) and paste (Ctrl/Cmd+V) the red layer onto your poster, positioning with Ctrl/Cmd+T.

Blend it in Set the layer's blending mode to Multiply and use an Opacity of 85%. Use a texture brush on a layer mask to distress your sketch for the finishing, aged effect.

BRING IN THE PAPER

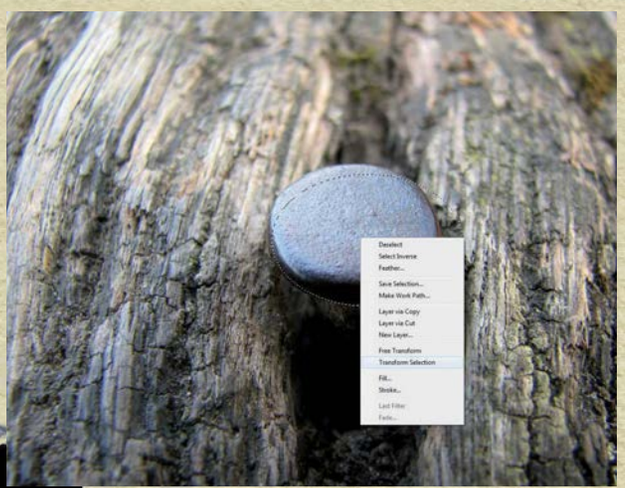
Cut out and paste in the poster

04 Build up the gradients Double-click the colour swatch and choose a colour of R:59 G:38 B:0. Use a radial gradient and click and drag the tool from each of the corners inwards slightly. Use the linear gradient and click and drag from the side edges inwards and from the top and bottom inwards. Repeat this to build up the contrast.

05 Delete the paper's background Open 'aged paper.jpg' (on the CD). Double-click the Background layer and click OK to make it editable. Select the Magic Wand tool, set the Tolerance to 17 then click areas of the background and press Backspace to delete them. After deleting the main background areas, check all around the edges of the paper and delete the smaller patches and shadows.

06 Soften the edges Copy and paste the paper into your artwork and name the layer Paper. Right-click the Paper layer's thumbnail to select it and press Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the selection. Go to Select>Feather, enter a value of 10px then click OK. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, enter a value of 6px and click OK, then press Ctrl/Cmd+D to deselect.

07 Add a drop shadow Now press Ctrl/Cmd+T and angle the paper very slightly, then drag the corners while holding Shift to retain the proportions and enlarge it. Double-click the paper layer's thumbnail, tick Drop Shadow and enter the following values in the palette: Opacity 60%, angle 74 degrees, Distance 25, Spread 6 and Size 8.

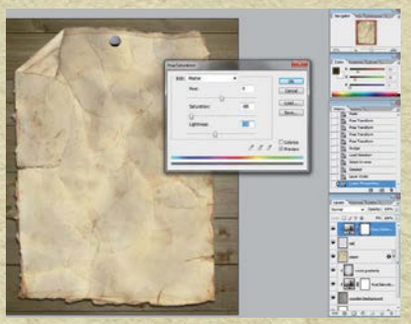


08 Select the nail Open the 'nail.jpg' stock image. Select the Elliptical Marquee tool (click and hold the marquee tool and choose the elliptical shape) and drag out a rough selection around the nail. Right-click on your selection and choose Transform selection from the fly-out menu. Drag the corners to refine the selection.

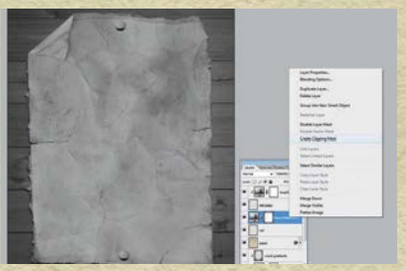
START ADDING SOME DETAILS

Add nails to your poster and bring in your photo

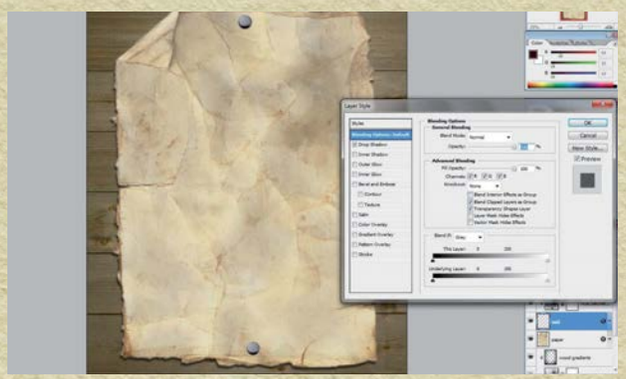
09 Cut your nails Copy and paste the nail selection into your artwork. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T to move it to the top middle of your paper and resize it, then right-click, choose Distort and drag the top upwards to make it look less angled. Right-click the nail layer's thumbnail to select it, and press Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the selection.



10 Soften the nail image Go to Select>Feather, enter 10px and click OK. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur, enter a value of 6px and click OK. Add a clipped Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to the nail and change Saturation to -88 and Lightness to -19.



11 Make a duplicate Next, press Ctrl/Cmd+J on the nail layer to duplicate it, and position it at the bottom middle of the poster. Duplicate the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer by holding Alt and dragging it down below the nail copy layer. Right-click the second Hue/Saturation layer and choose Create clipping mask from the menu.



12 More drop shadows Add a drop shadow to one of the nail layers using 75% Opacity, Angle 74, Distance 5, Spread 5 and Size 9 on the layer style. Hold Alt and click the layer style icon, which appears in the Layers palette next to the nail layer's name, and drag it up onto the other nail layer to copy and apply the same drop shadow.

13 Time for the photo Get the mug shot photo you want to put on your poster, or open the stock photo, and copy and paste it into your artwork, positioning it above the paper layer in the stack. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T and angle it to match the paper angle. Resize it appropriately and change its blending mode to Multiply.

14 Desaturate your photo Press Ctrl/Cmd+U and reduce the saturation to -100 to desaturate your photo. Double-click the photo layer's thumbnail and click on Color Overlay in the Layer Style window. Change the blending mode to Color, click the colour square and choose a colour of R:80 G:63 B:45.

15 Paper shadow Create a new layer directly above the paper layer and change its blending mode to Multiply and layer Opacity to 60%. Use a black hard edge brush to draw a shadow underneath the paper curl at the top left. Select the Eraser tool and choose an airbrush. Use it to soften the bottom edge of the shadow.

Tip

Clipping mask adjustment layers

Whenever you make any changes to an image, it's always best not to do anything irreversible, just in case you change your mind. This is why adjustment layers are great. Instead of applying the change to the layer itself, you can double-click on the adjustment layer and tweak it at any time. Check the adjustment layer fly-out menu to see all the different edits that can be applied in this way.

Tip

Click and drag

Who would've thought that clicking and dragging could have so many uses? Hold Shift while clicking to select multiple layers and Ctrl/Cmd-click the thumbnail to select the contents of a layer. Holding Shift lets you select multiple layers' contents together and double-clicking a layer accesses the Layer Style dialog. Holding Alt whilst clicking and dragging also duplicates the layer.

FINISH THE POSTER

Add some distressed text and blend the effects

16 Type it out Use the western-style font from Font Squirrel to apply your text with a colour of R:54 G:10 B:10, and change each layer's blending mode to Multiply with Opacity at 85%. Press Ctrl/Cmd+T and angle and position each text layer appropriately. Make sure that the W in WANTED overlaps the paper curl slightly to centre it.

17 Group the text Select all the text layers together (hold Shift while clicking the layers) and press Ctrl/Cmd+G to group them. Apply a layer mask to the group (click the circle in a square icon in the Layers palette) and use a black brush on the mask to paint out the portion overlapping the curl.

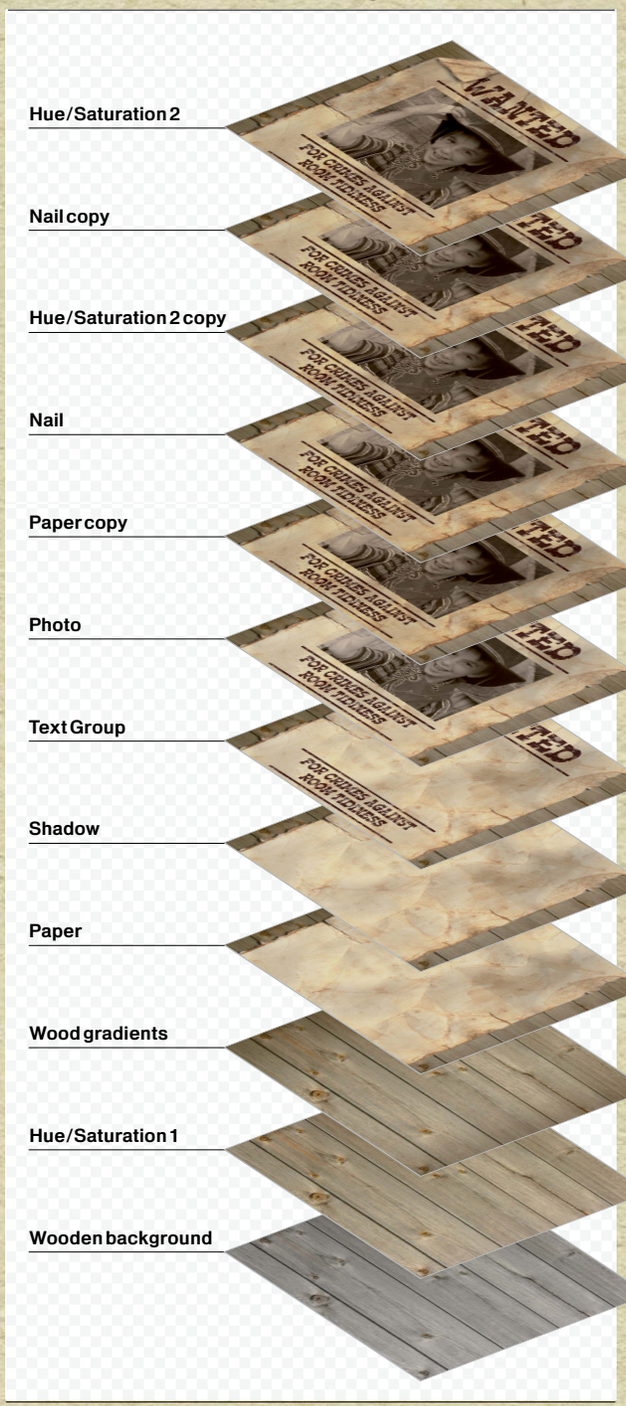
18 The bottom line Select the Line tool and change the Weight to 20px. Using the same colour as you did for the text, click and drag to add the three horizontal lines that break up the poster and frame the photo. Change the blending mode to Multiply and the Opacity to 85% for each of the line layers.

19 Distress the details Click and drag the line layers into the text group in the Layers palette, select the Brush tool and use the distress brush (on the CD) on the group's layer mask to distress the text and lines by dabbing randomly with the brush.

20 A finishing touch On the paper layer, press Ctrl/Cmd+J to duplicate it, move the layer above everything except the nail layers, and change the blending mode to Multiply and Opacity to 50%. Double-click the layer style icon, untick Drop Shadow to remove it and you're done.

Layer structure

Understand the image



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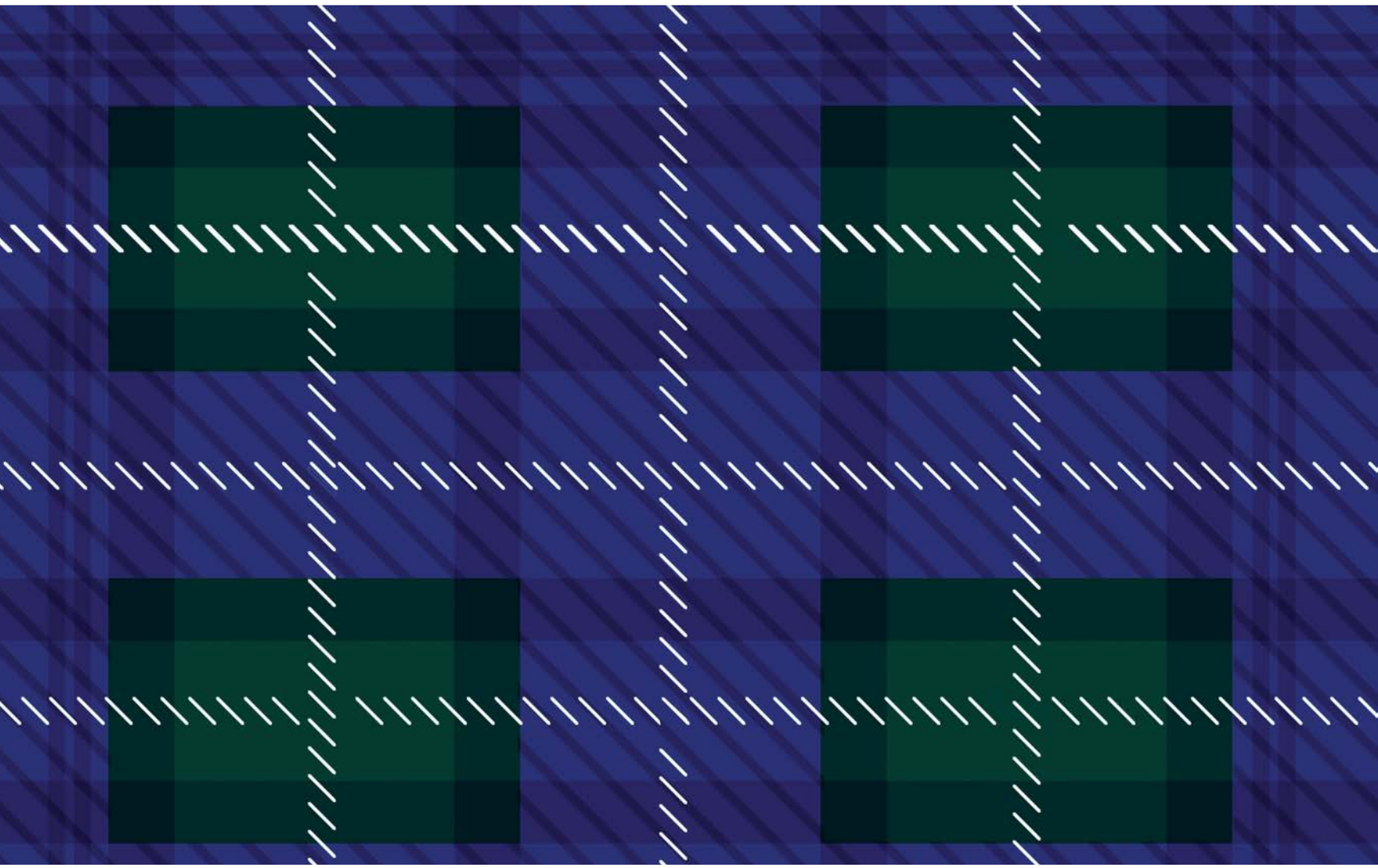


Making a tartan texture

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
30 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Simon Rudd

ON THE DISC
lines.pat
stitches.

Photoshop has a huge array of tools available to use. These are not restricted to just editing photos, however, as we prove by creating a bonnie Scottish pattern

We can use the tools available in Photoshop to make standalone art as well as textures. In this case we will be investigating how to use a selection of tools to produce a tartan texture effect that can be used for scrapbook backgrounds, digital collage, enhancing a photo or anything else you can think of. The key tools needed for this project are the Rectangle shape tool, the Pen tool, Guides, Rulers, stroke using the Brush tool and patterns. We initially set up the guide lines to break the canvas into 16 equal rectangles and this is our basis to how the tartan will be laid out. We then add four green rectangles, one into each quarter. The tartan pattern is expanded by adding further horizontal and vertical lines until the desired look is achieved. Next we add a stitching effect to the texture using a custom brush and the stroke effect, before finally using a pattern file to create the horizontal lines that we will convert into diagonal ones using the Rotate Canvas feature. In this project, we resized our A4 document to make the calculations and positions of the guides easier to work out and set, but after we have finished we can resize back to A4 by adjusting the width to 297mm and the height to 210mm. The tartan pattern we used here can easily be adjusted to create different effects, for example by adding more lines and rectangles or altering the colours that you use.

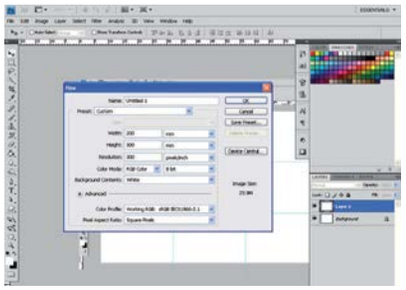
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

GET A HIGHLAND TEXTURE IN PHOTOSHOP

Set up the canvas and guide lines

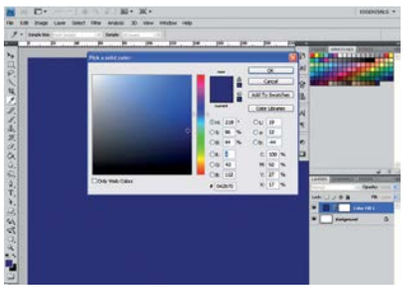
KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

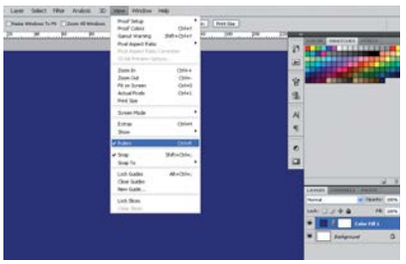
- RECTANGLE SHAPE TOOL
- GUIDES
- BLEND MODES
- PATTERN FILL
- BRUSH TOOL
- PEN TOOL
- RULERS



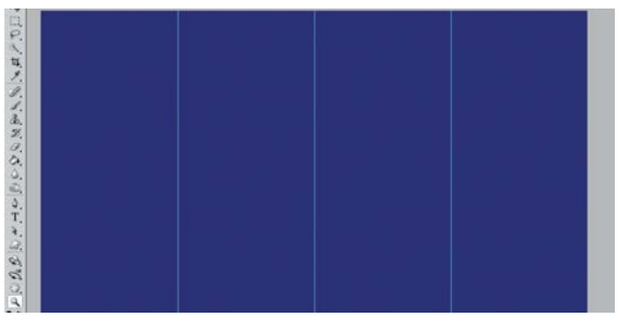
01 **Let's begin** First we want to create a new A4 document. Go to File>New and, if using CS4 or above, choose International Paper from the Preset list, then A4 from the Size list. If you have an earlier version, choose the A4 preset but in both cases change Width to 200 and Height to 300.

02 **Rotation** We want the document landscape not portrait so we rotate it by 90° by going to Image>Rotate Canvas>90° CW. Next, we add a Solid Color fill layer by going to Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid Color and setting the colour to #042b70. This establishes the blue base for our texture.



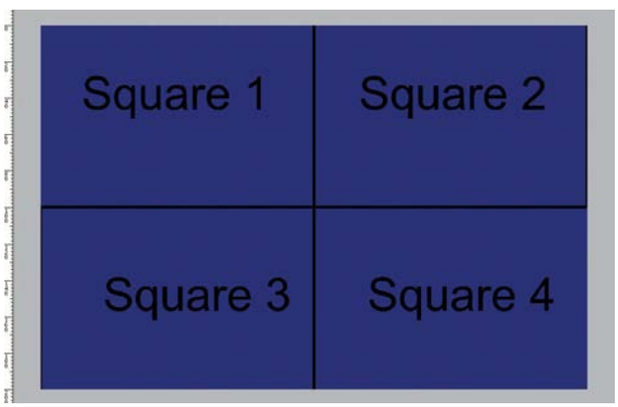


03 **Guide lines** We are going to divide our canvas up into sections horizontally and vertically using the Guides feature. First, we want to make sure that we can actually see the lines by going to View>Show and making sure that Guides is ticked. Then we make sure Extras and Rulers are also ticked in the View menu.

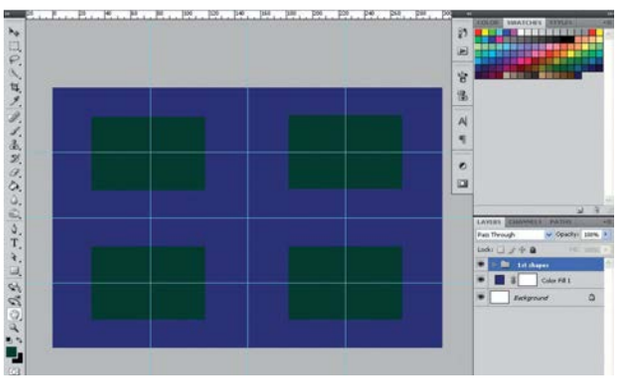


04 **Drag and drop** To pull out a guide we first select the Move tool from the Toolbar and click and hold the left mouse button (or Ctrl) on the ruler that is located at the far left-hand side of the screen. Drag this to the right until the guide is at 75mm, and then repeat this for the positions of 150mm and 225mm as well.

05 **Horizontal lines** Now we have the vertical lines set we want to do the same for the horizontal ones. This time we use the rule from the top of the canvas, and as before, use the Move tool and pull guides out to 50mm, 100mm and 150mm.



06 **Adding a pattern** We now have a grid of 16 small squares, but it is helpful to think of it as four large squares that are each divided into quarters. Set your Foreground colour to #003b2e by clicking on the Foreground swatch and typing the hex number into the box near the bottom of the Color Picker dialog.



07 **First rectangles** Choose the Rectangle shape tool from the Toolbar with Shape layers selected in the Options bar and draw one in each quarter. You should now have a green rectangle shape in the centre of each square. Select all four in your Layers palette and hold Ctrl/Cmd+G to collect them together in a group. Name the group 1st Shapes to make the palette more manageable.

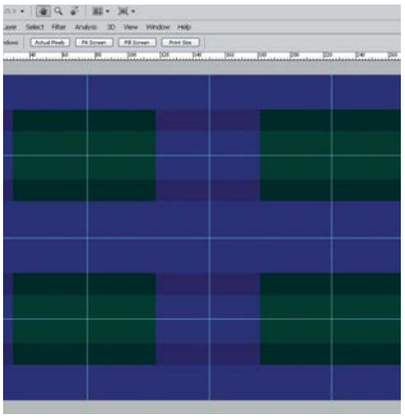
Tip

Rulers

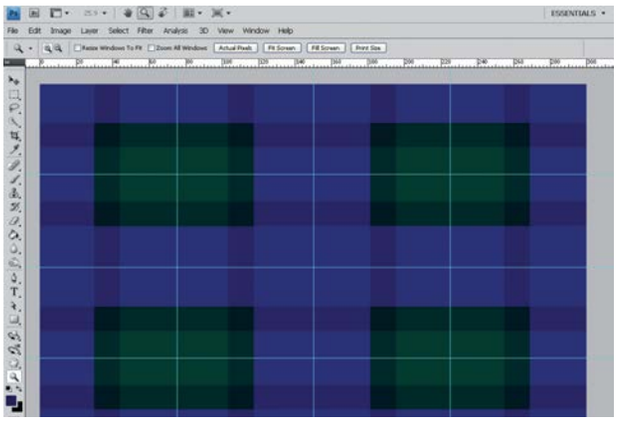
The rulers in Photoshop can be set to different measurements, and in this tutorial we need them to be set to millimetres rather than the default pixels. We can change the measurements easily by Ctrl/right-clicking on the ruler and selecting from pixels, inches, centimetres, millimetres, points, picas and percent. Usually we will want to set this to pixels but it is very useful to have the option to set it to different measurements.

ADD MORE DETAIL TO THE DIGITAL CLOTH

Use the Rectangle shape tool, Brush tool and Pattern fill

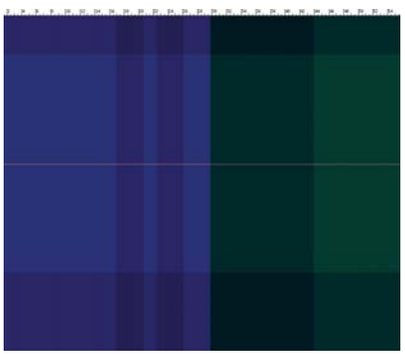


08 More rectangles Set your Foreground colour to #001f55 and using the Rectangle shape tool, draw four rectangles the length of your canvas. Each should cover the top and bottom quarter of the green rectangles made in step 7. Set the blending mode to Overlay and reduce the Opacity to 35%.

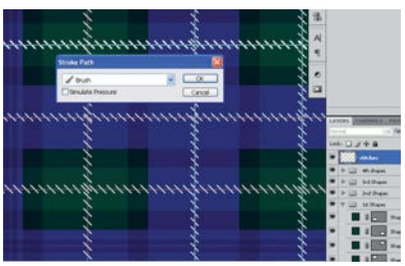


09 And still more Group the last set together and name them 2nd Shapes, then create some vertical rectangles to go with the horizontal ones. Group and name this set 3rd Shapes. Next, draw a number of thin rectangles going both horizontally and vertically across our canvas in this colour.

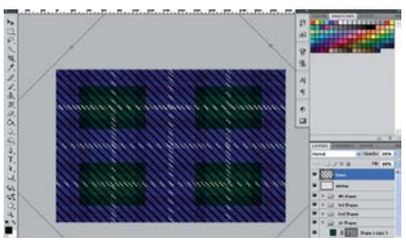
10 Thin ones Make two very thin vertical rectangles in the same colour with the blending mode and opacity as before and place them near the left-hand side of the left green rectangles. Do this again for the right side of the right hand green rectangles. We now want to repeat this with horizontal rectangles, placing two at the top and two at the bottom, for a bit of variety.



11 A stitch in time First, make a new Layer at the top of your stack called Stitches, then reset your swatch by pressing D+X on your keyboard to set your Foreground to white. We now want to add a stitching effect. From your disc locate the file 'stitches.abr' and double-click it to install a brush. Locate the brush Stitch 100 gap in the library.



12 Stroke the path Next, grab the Pen tool from the Toolbar, making sure the Paths option is selected, and trace over one of the guides. With the Pen tool still selected, Ctrl/right-click on your line and from the dialog box choose Stroke, but do not click Simulate Pressure. Repeat this for each guide line until you have a grid of six stitched lines.



13 Lines pattern On your disc, find the file 'lines.pat' and install it. Select the Paint Bucket tool and change the option to Pattern. Next, locate the installed pattern Lines and, on a new layer, fill it. Rotate the layer 45° and resize, using the Eraser tool to remove any parts of the pattern that cover the green rectangles. Set the blending mode to Overlay and lower the Opacity to 20%.

Layer structure

Weave a themed image

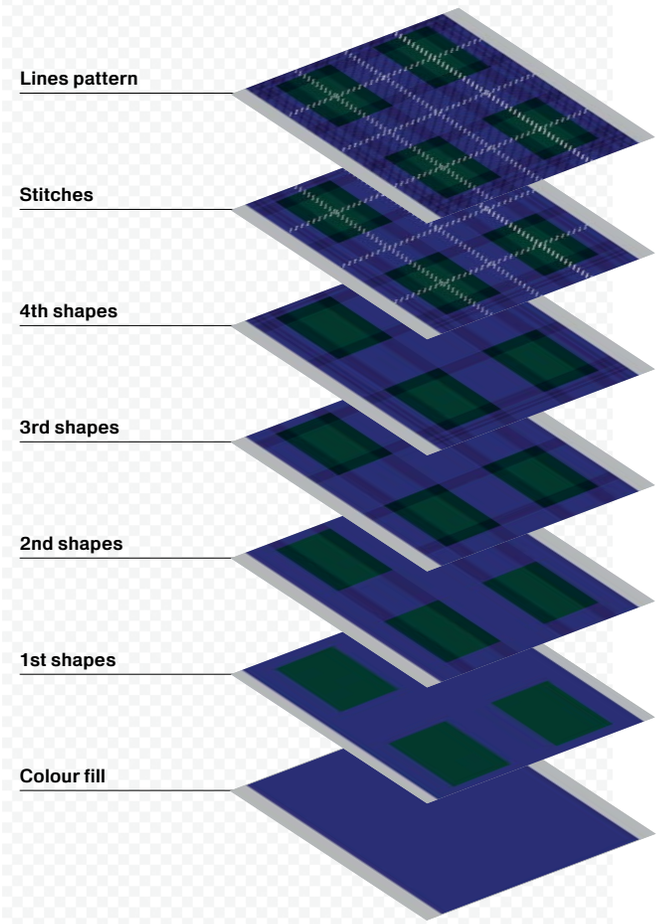


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Image brightened overall

Fix exposure with traditional techniques

Don't despair if your exposure is incorrect – you can use adjustment layers to emulate the traditional practice of dodging and burning and reveal hidden detail

Dodge, Burn and Sponge are three tools packaged within Photoshop that should spend most of their time locked in the cupboard under the stairs. They're destructive, meaning that if you use them directly on a pixel-based layer, you've only got the Undo command should you decide that you've made a proper mess or aren't happy. And as you'll probably already know, this means undoing everything else you've done in the process, some of which might be perfectly good work.

A better, non-destructive method is to use adjustment layers and their masks. Separate Curves layers can be used instead of Dodge and Burn, and separate Hue/Saturation layers can be used as an alternative for Sponge – increasing and decreasing saturation. The layer mask allows you to apply these edits to specific parts of the image just as you would with those naughty Dodge, Burn and Sponge tools, but this time all your work is recorded on the layer mask and undone at any time by simply brushing with black instead of white. Nothing else you do will have been affected, allowing you to be more creative and experimental.

But why should you dodge, burn and alter saturation in the first place? Well, quite often the lighting or tones that nature provides aren't always the most beautiful. Dodging can draw attention to pivotal details while burning is great for knocking back elements that are better hidden. Saturation is great for focusing the eye to the centre of the frame, and used together they're a formidable, image-editing team.

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
45 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Matt Henry

ON THE DISC
exposure start.JPG

THREE STEPS TO LAY OUR FOUNDATIONS

Add dodge, burn and two saturation layers

01 **Add a dodge layer** Open up your CD image and start by adding a Curves adjustment layer using the button at the base of the Layers palette. Push the Curve up hard with a single point and invert the layer mask using Ctrl/Cmd+I to Hide All. Double-click the layer text and rename it Dodge.

02 **Add a burn layer** Now add a second Curves layer in the same way, this time pulling the Curve down hard with a single point for your burn effect. Invert the layer mask again with Ctrl/Cmd+I and rename it Burn. Now add a third adjustment layer with the same button, this time for Hue/Saturation.

03 **Saturation layers** Push Saturation up to +35 and invert the mask as before. Double-click the layer text and rename it Sat Increase. Add one more Hue/Saturation layer and pull the Saturation slider down to -35. Invert and rename it Sat Decrease.

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

CURVES ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

HUE/SATURATION ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

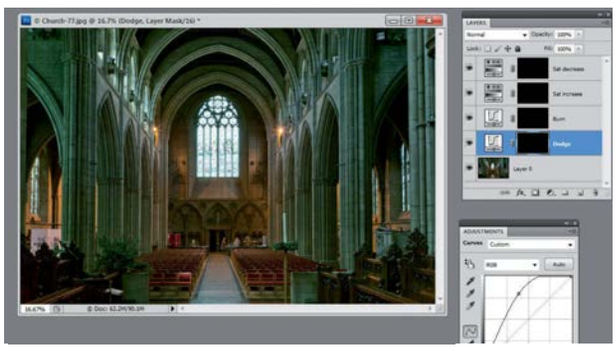
HIDE ALL LAYER MASKS

BRUSH TOOL

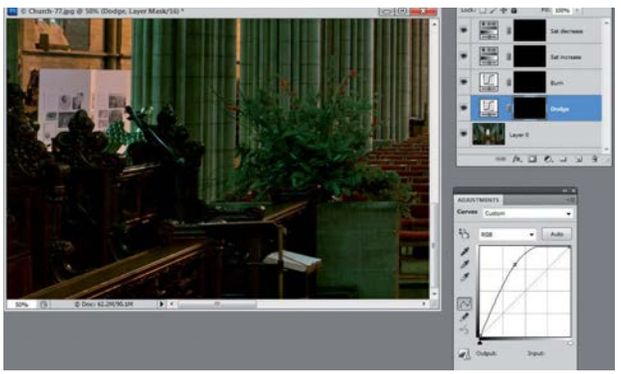
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE

BEGIN THE DODGE WORK

Focus on the details to draw the eye



04 **Set up the Brush tool** Now we're ready to do our work. Press D to reset the colour palette to white and black and B to access the Brush tool. Set it to 0% Hardness. We're going to start by using dodge to bring out detail in the darker areas that we'd like to draw more attention to. Click the Dodge layer mask to make it active.



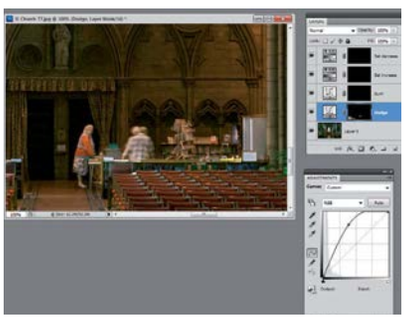
05 **Zoom in** Now use Ctrl/Cmd and + to zoom in to the pews on the bottom left of our image. You can hold down Space and click and drag to move around once you've zoomed in. Resize the Brush tool appropriately with [and] and press 3 to set the brush Opacity to 30%.

Tip

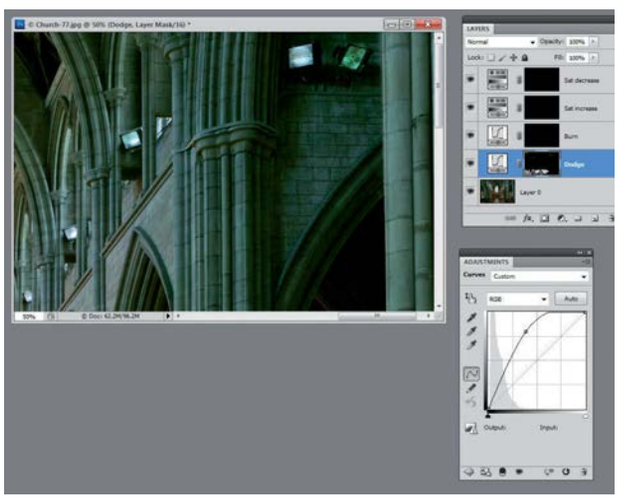
Burning for the corners

If you're using dodge or burn layers to correct large areas rather than small details, you need to use a very large brush for a more graduated effect. Zoom far out and pull the edges of the window to reveal an area outside of the canvas, then work with the brush edge for subtlety.

06 **Dodge to balance tones** Brush over the pew area as many times as necessary to lighten it to match the lighter pews on the right of the image (zoom out to compare if needs be). Focus most on the darker areas. The stone wall on the left needs balancing to match the right one, too.



07 **Dodge people** Elsewhere the tones are pretty symmetrical, so we're going to use dodge to draw attention to important areas. The people and the stall in the background are a good starting point, so zoom in close and brush over them as needed.



08 **Dodge more details** Work around the rest of the image in the same way, picking out areas to lighten. The flowers in the foreground are a good idea, as are the chairs in the centre of the shot and the centre aisle. We also worked over the spot lamps along the top and the dark areas in the arches.

Dodge and burn in colour

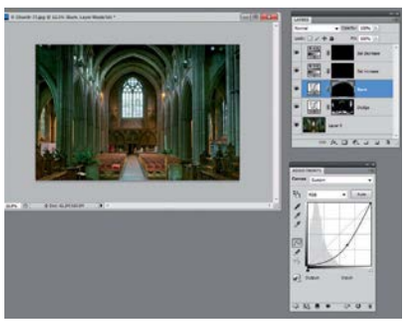
Keeping it real

Traditionally dodging and burning were techniques used on monochrome images. The process of removing colour already affords a sense of unreality so adjustments to tonality tend rarely to bother the viewer. Colour imagery provides greater expectations of reality, as it's viewed as being that much closer to an authentic reproduction of the world. This means dodging and burning, as well as colour saturation changes, tend to have a much stronger impact on the eye, appearing to drive a scene more towards a cartoon or hyperreal mood. If you're trying to maintain a semblance of photographic reality, you'll need to be very conservative with your adjustments and focus them on larger areas rather than specific details. If you want to go for the cartoon look, however, strong adjustments in lots of small areas or sections are the way to go for a stylised effect.

If you want to go for the hyperreal look, try upping the settings on your Curves and Hue/Saturation layers for non-naturalistic tones

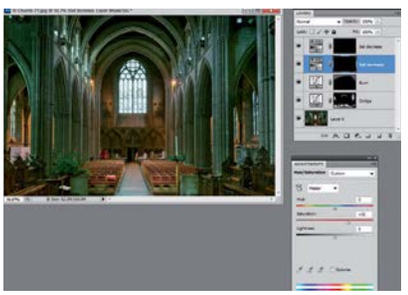
FINISH WITH BURNING AND SATURATION

Enhance the light and perfect the tones



09 **Burn corners** Next, click the layer mask on the Burn layer. We're going to use a very large brush, again at 30%, to darken the top-right and top-left corners to focus attention towards the middle of the shot. Brush twice over each corner, but don't overdo it.

10 **Burn windows** Press 0 for 100% brush Opacity, size the brush very small and zoom in on the stained glass windows on the back wall. We want to work over all the detail in the stained glass without touching the walls in between, which would become overly dark at 100% Opacity. Undo if you make a mistake and just repeat.



11 **Sat increase** We can use saturation increases to bring out colour in important areas too. Click the Sat Increase layer mask. We can stay at 100% brush Opacity for this one as we know we want to increase the colour in our chosen areas by the same initial setting of +35 as we did with our burn.

Tip

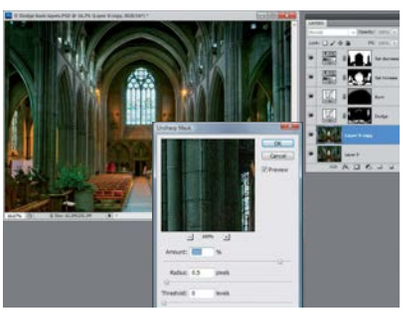
Correcting converging verticals

When shooting large structures, chances are you're going to have to point your camera upwards and this means that the verticals are going to lean inwards. Correct this by running Edit>Transform> Perspective on a duplicate of the Background layer.

12 **Brush the colour in** Now work over the people, pews, the foreground foliage, the stained glass windows and any areas with orange light as well as the whole of the back wall, including the stained glass windows. You can alter the Saturation slider if you want to increase or decrease the effect.

13 **Sat decrease** We're ready to reduce saturation in certain areas. Click the Sat Decrease adjustment layer mask. Again, we can work at 100% here as -35 is a pretty good setting for our work. The stone work has a green tinge which isn't the ideal hue for this image, so we can use this layer to pull some of that colour out.

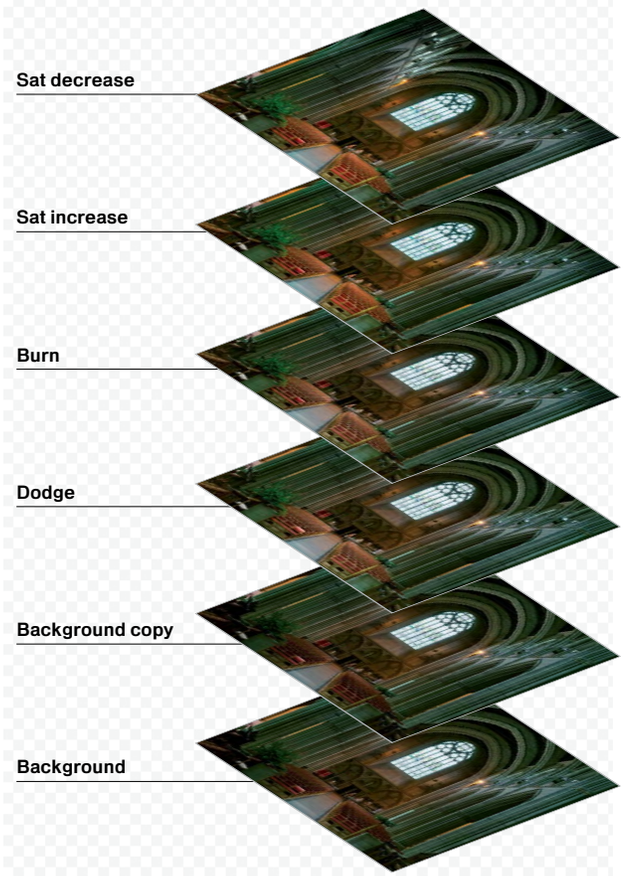
14 **Brush the colour out** Resize the brush to suit and carefully brush the adjustment into the stone walls to knock back the colour, being careful to avoid any areas of wall illuminated by orange light. Pulling out the colour here also makes the orange lit areas look more impressive and attract the eye.



15 **Sharpen to finish** Finish by running the Unsharp Mask filter on a duplicate of your Background layer (use Ctrl/Cmd+J to duplicate). A Radius of 0.5 pixels with 300% Amount is great for a full resolution image, though you'll need around 80% Amount for the image on your disc.

Layer structure

Build the right tones



THE BIG TECHNIQUE

AS SEEN ON THE COVER

Enhance images with layers

Discover layers with this guide to how they work, the various modes they use and how they can improve your images

Tip

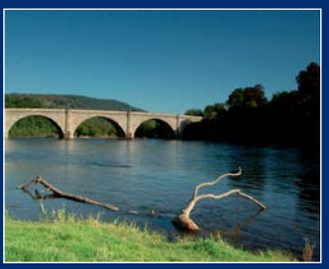
Group it up
As well as keeping your layer structure tidy, groups can have blending modes so that the sum of the entire image produced by the group is blended into the image below, according to the blend mode rule.

The Photoshop layer system has evolved into a comprehensive and sometimes fairly complex system of image adjustment and creation. Including the newest features showcased in Photoshop CS5, there are numerous ways of doing much the same thing, so understanding what all the options actually do if you are new to the system can be confusing. In this tutorial we're going to look at typical uses for the layer system in creating an image including blend modes, layer options, objects, groups and transparency. To this mix Adobe has also added adjustment layers where filters and effects can be applied and selectively masked so that areas that don't need it can be blocked off. So, as well as the layer styles and modes, the tutorial will also cover using some of the more useful adjustment layers. The main project is a scrapbook spread that you might typically put together with images of the kids, for example, as a present for an older relative. The starting point is to create an A3 sheet at 300dpi, but run it as a spread so that there is plenty of room for portrait orientated photos to be added. We'll also be using the Type tool to add some fancy writing. Remember, a Photoshop image starts with the Background layer, and then every layer above it is applied to the image according to the rules and specifications of that layer, object or adjustment.

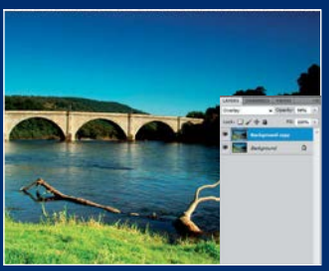
Using blending modes

Make an impact quickly

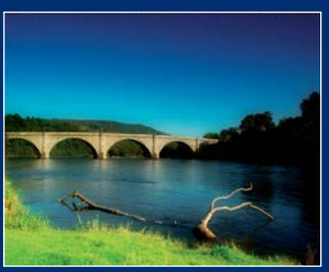
The layer's blending mode dictates how the layer interacts with the one underneath. As well as opening up a host of creative possibilities, the blend modes offer a simple way of making some swift improvement to your photos.



01 Fast photo fix This is a fast trick for boosting the contrast and colour of a fairly flat image from a digital camera. Load up your image, Ctrl/right-click on the Background layer and select Duplicate Layer. Now click on that layer to select it.



02 Instant contrast Change the blend mode of the top layer to Overlay for instant contrast and colour boost! You might lose some highlights, in which case reduce the layer opacity or add a layer mask and knock the effect back in those areas.



03 Fog and interest To add even more ambiance to the image, try going to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur on the top layer. Set it to 50px. You'll now have extra contrast, colour and glowing patches. Mask if you've lost any shadows.

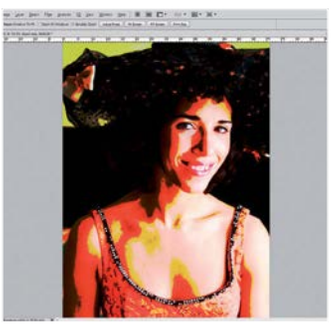
Darken blending modes

Instant replacements

The blending modes for layers work on rules specific to each mode. Those with similar effects, or similar rules, tend to be grouped together, even if the effect they produce can be quite different. The Darken group use the philosophy that where a pixel in the top layer is darker than the pixel in the layer below, it replaces it. If it isn't, the original pixel is displayed. The rules vary for each layer, and even the Darken group has different effects. One of the handiest is the Darken blend mode itself. You can use this effectively for replacing white skies with blue ones from a different picture without having to make fiddly selections. Just add it over the top, set the blend mode to Darken and the blue will replace the white.

The Overlay group

Multiplying the colours for effect



The group of blend modes that start with Overlay are used to multiply the strengths of colours in the top layer against the image below. These can be very useful in creating instant contrast and colour boosts – just tinker with the Opacity to stop the effect losing highlights. See the short, three-step guide to using this process. One of the other useful blend modes in this section is the Hard Mix mode. This creates a graphic poster effect with a reduced palette of colours. It can be very striking, though if you find too much skin tone is lost you can reduce the Opacity of the Hard Mix layer to make it slightly more subtle.

Smart object filters This layer features both a layer style and also a Smart Filter effect, as the image is a Smart Object. These are both non-destructive and can be edited after being applied by double-clicking on the entry in the Layers palette.

Layer masks This layer is near the bottom of the stack. It features a layer mask that is used to mask out the edges of the photo. Painting black blocks out the photo, while switching the Foreground colour to white enables you to remove it and reveal the photo.

Layer blend mode There are numerous blend modes available. The blend mode sets how the layer is combined with the one underneath it. The Opacity sets how much of this layer is actually applied, so by varying this you can lessen the effect. The Linear Burn mode has been used to blend the car into the background.

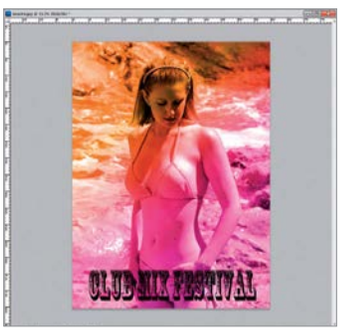
Smart Objects When images are dropped directly onto the Photoshop project they are created as Smart Objects, as per the icon in the corner of the layer picture. The eye to the left toggles visibility on and off. Effects or filters are shown below the layer picture and masks appear to the right.

Add effects This row of icons is used to add things to layers. From left to right they lock layers together, add layer styles, add a layer mask, add an adjustment layer, create a new group, add a new, blank layer and delete the current layer.

Blending colours

Use the Color mode

One of the most interesting and useful blend modes available in Photoshop is the Color mode. This works by retaining the luminosity of the base image but replacing the colour and saturation with that of the blend layer. In practice, it means you can tone black and white images with colour or add new tones to an existing colour image, which is the case in the example shown here. The background image retains the greyscale luminosity that forms the picture, but the orange-purple colour layer created tints the entire image.



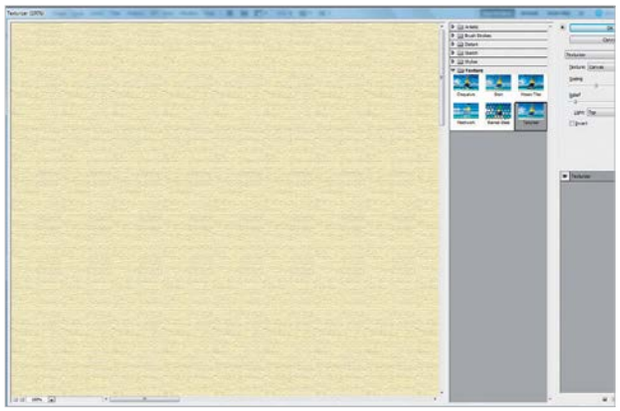
Locking into place

Use the Lock icons to protect areas

If you've got an image, particularly something that's been cut out, and you want to paint into it rather than select the image to protect it, use the Lock functions. These run next to the Lock words in the Layers palette and lock transparent pixels or image pixels from being painted over. They can also lock the image into place so it can't be moved, or lock all of these elements in one go. It can prevent elements of large compositions from either being inadvertently painted over or moved and is particularly useful therefore in collage or scrapbooking projects.

CREATE A SCRAPBOOK

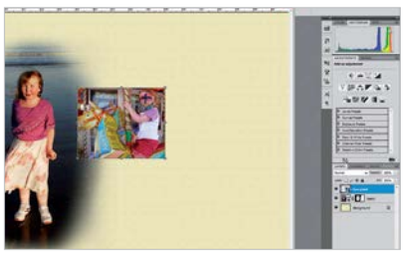
Use the layer system to present a collection of images and text



01 **Start the base** The first step is to create a new, blank canvas. Create it using the A3 template, but switch the resolutions over so it is wide rather than tall. Fill with a pale cream colour, and then go to Filter>Texture>Texturizer and add a canvas effect.

02 **Drop in the image** Grab your first image and drag it from your folder or desktop directly into Photoshop and onto the project. Click on Place to confirm adding it. It will be added as a new layer with the name of the file. Select the Move tool and position the image to where you want it.

03 **Add layer mask** Click on the Add Layer Mask icon in the Layers palette to add a mask. Next, select the Brush tool and set black as the Foreground colour. Change the Opacity to around 67% and quickly block out the edges of the image by painting around it, then use an Opacity of 15% to create a vignette effect.



04 **Resize image** Grab another photo and drag and drop it into the composition. It should appear at the top of the layer stack. Click on the chain icon between the W and H measurements on the tool bar along the top. This locks the aspect ratio. Now scale the image so that it's smaller and click on the tick symbol to apply.

05 **Add a drop shadow** Select the Move tool and ensure there is a tick in the Show Transform Controls box. Use the right-hand edge control point to rotate the image clockwise. Apply it and then move to the bottom left of the picture. In the Layers palette click on the FX icon for the Layer Style menu. Add a drop shadow with a Distance of 35, Spread of 15 and Size of 30.

06 **Repeat the process** Time to grab another photo and repeat the same process. Resize it, rotate in the other direction and use the Layer Style function to add the Outer Glow effect. This should use the same Foreground colour that the Background layer uses. Set the size of the image to 35px.

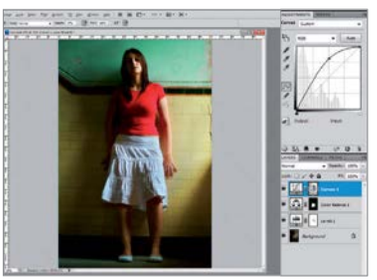
Using adjustment layers

Turning colour into mono

Adjustment layers are special effects layers that sit on their own and are applied to the entire image below in the layer stack. They also come with a layer mask so that you can block off any parts of the effect. The image here shows the Black and White adjustment layer being used to turn this colour image to mono. The key element is that the dress is a bright cyan colour, so using the adjustment layer controls it can be made to look anything from quite dark to virtually white. The advantage of adjustment layers over simply applying an effect is that if you double-click on the layer itself the adjustment can be changed, so they are non-destructive.

Correcting brightness

Adjusting brightness and colour casts

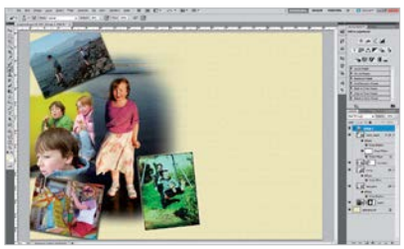


This image uses three adjustment layers. The first is Levels to widen the tonal range. Some highlights disappear on the skirt, so that is masked. The Color Balance adjustment is for the blue colour cast on the skirt. Red was added to neutralise it and then the rest of the image was masked off as it made the shirt far too garish. Finally, it's a dark and dingy hallway, but it's a little too dark on the face. A Curves adjustment layer is used, keying on the face for the overall brightness, with masking used to subdue the effect elsewhere.

07 **Smart filter** Drag and drop another image and resize and position it in the top left. Dragging and dropping images like this turns them into Smart Objects on their own layers (see the boxout for more details). Go to Filter>Artistic>Poster Edges and apply. To change the effect at any point, double-click on the effect on that layer.

08 **Combination layers** Now you can add combinations of effects. Click on the FX icon again and add a drop shadow to this Smart Object with the Smart Filter. Use settings of Distance 25, Spread 15 and Size 30. This layer now shows layer effects and Smart Filters, both of which are editable.

09 **Layer placement** Grab another image – this needs to be dropped in on the left side. Move it below your first image layer in the Layers palette. Click on Add layer mask, select a rough brush, and with the Foreground set to black at Opacity 40%, nibble off the edges by painting on the mask.



10 **Group them up** Our digital canvas is getting fairly busy now, but as we've finished with the left side of the image, click on the Create New Group icon in the Layers palette. Hold down Ctrl/Cmd and click on each layer to select them all except the Background. Then drag them onto the Group 1 layer. Click on the down arrow in Group 1 to hide all these layers for now.

11 **Add the rest of the pictures** Using the same techniques, add the rest of your pictures to the right side of the image, leaving a little gap in the middle for some text. Create another group and drag all these new layers into that. We added a picture of the family pet, positioned it above the Background layer and blended it in using the Linear Burn blend mode.

12 **Add some text** Roll up the right-hand image by clicking on the group down arrow. Rename the groups to organise them. Now click on the Type tool, select Charlemagne Std Bold at 60pt and type some text, with a return after each word. Click on the Warp Text icon, setting Style as Rise. Change the Bend to -4% and add a drop shadow to finish.

Tip

Editable styles

Because all layer styles are editable and non-destructive, you can experiment with how they look and work all you like. On the drop shadow, the Distance rating sets how far away the shadow falls which increases the 3D effect. The Size sets how much drop shadow there is while the Spread rating makes it less dense and frayed. If you end up not liking the layer style at all, then simply Ctrl/right-click on the layer and select Clear Layer Style to get rid of it.

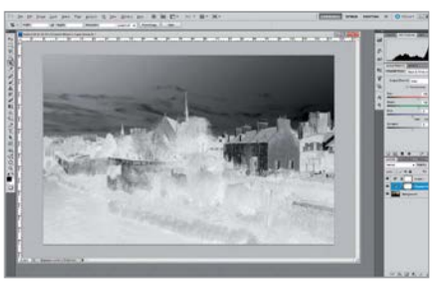
Boosting colour

Vibrance and Hue/Saturation adjustments

The colour in this shot of an old barn in the afternoon sunlight was killed by the wrong white balance setting. So, a Vibrance adjustment layer is used overall to make it more vivid. Then, three Hue/Saturation adjustment layers are used to increase the colour in the barn, the fields, and finally the roof and sky. The other areas on each adjustment layer are masked so the effect can be more precise. Pushing the saturation up across the board isn't as effective and risks more colour noise.

Infrared effect

Use the Channel Mixer and Invert adjustments



While to some extent the Channel Mixer has been rendered redundant for monochrome conversion by the Black and White adjustment, it still has its uses thanks to some handy presets. For this image, the Channel Mixer adjustment layer uses the Black & White with Orange preset to split the channels into Red: 50%, Green: 50% and Blue: 0% when converting. The Invert adjustment layer used on top of this then gives the entire image an infrared look.

Light leak effect

We show you how to re-create this photographic blip for a nostalgic, lo-fi look

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
30 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Matt Henry

ON THE DISC
Light leak CD image.jpg

If you've leafed through many photography blogs of late you'll have noticed an appetite for photographic nostalgia in the online community. Sitting alongside imagery from times gone by you'll find a whole host of contemporary images retouched to look like it was captured on a vintage camera. Polaroid effects that give images a touch of blur with strange colour casts are popular, as are images with various coloured blotches and artefacts that simulate poorly constructed budget cameras or processing problems. For those up with current technological trends, there are whole iPhone apps, such as the Hipstamatic, dedicated to creating some of these looks and effects.

One of the most popular you'll find on the web is light leak, which usually manifests itself as an area of yellowy orange coming in from the edge or corner of an image. It was a symptom of light leaking in through an otherwise sealed camera back, overexposing a portion of the film, and was a common blight of many budget or 'toy' cameras such as the Holga, Diana, LOMO and Lubitel brands. It's relatively easy to apply to a digital image with some careful Levels work and the use of the Gradient tool for the layer mask. Note that the settings here work for the particular array of tones in the image of the girl that we've used, so feel free (in fact, feel obliged!) to push and pull the sliders to suit your own precious pics.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

ADD CONTRAST AND COLOUR

All the work is done with a single Levels adjustment layer

KEY SKILLS COVERED

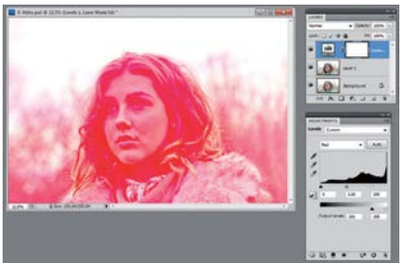
What you'll learn

AUTO CONTRAST LEVELS

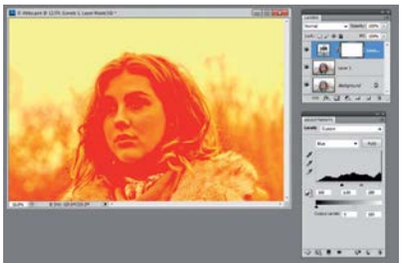
GRADIENT TOOL

LAYER MASKS

01 **Set up basic contrast** Open up your disc image. The contrast looks a little weak, so the first thing we're going to do is ensure there's a full range of tones from black to white. Duplicate the Background layer with Ctrl/Cmd+J, and then run Image>Auto Contrast.



02 **Add the reds** Now we're ready to start creating our light leaked colour. Add a Levels adjustment layer using the button at the base of the Layers palette. Select Red from the drop-down menu instead of RGB, and push the white slider on the top ramp to 200 and similarly move the black slider on the bottom ramp to 200.

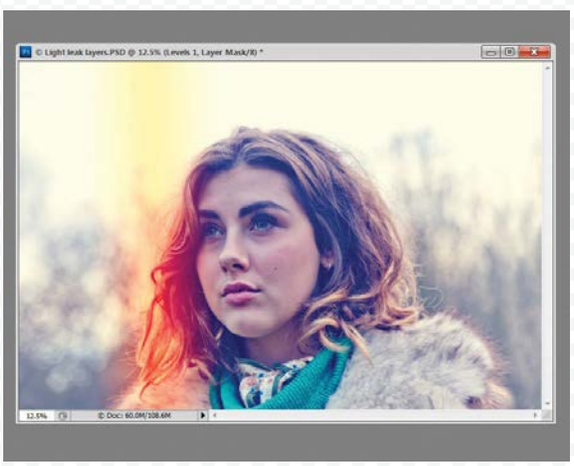


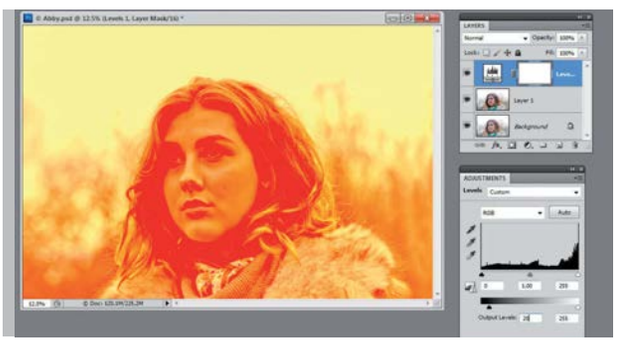
03 **Add the yellows** We've now added our red. Next, select Blue from the drop-down menu and move the black slider on the top ramp inwards to 100 and the white slider on the bottom ramp to 150 to add our yellow. The different figures for the settings ensure some areas are redder and some more yellow, emulating the real effect.

Alternate light leak

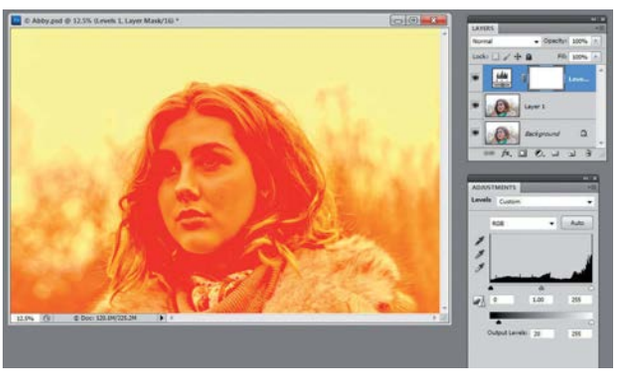
Use layer masks for a different effect

Sometimes light leak can manifest itself as a strip of light further into the photo, or as blotches or shaped patches rather than a vertical or horizontal strip. To re-create the former, you'll need to use a reflected rather than a linear gradient. It's the fourth of five options in the tool's Options bar. Then simply draw on the image with black and white and the layer mask selected to determine the width of the strip. Try drawing a few to get a sense of how it works. You can use the same Levels layer as for the linear gradient. To draw blotches of light, you can simply paint onto the image with a white brush and the layer mask selected. If you've already done gradient work, drag the layer mask to the trashcan and add another before you start. It's worth searching the web for light leak to get a feel for how the blotches or shapes of light leak can look.





04 **Incorporate some fade** The area containing the light leak is normally a little faded in tone as well as containing the colour cast we have just created. We can apply this lightening effect on the same Levels adjustment layer. Select RGB again from the drop-down menu and move the black slider on the bottom ramp to 20.



05 **Select the Gradient tool** Okay, we've now got the task of localising the light leak colour that's sitting on our adjustment layer to specific parts of the photo. It normally comes in from the corner or edge of the frame as we said before, and the Gradient tool is perfect for ensuring a subtle rendition. Press G to access this tool.

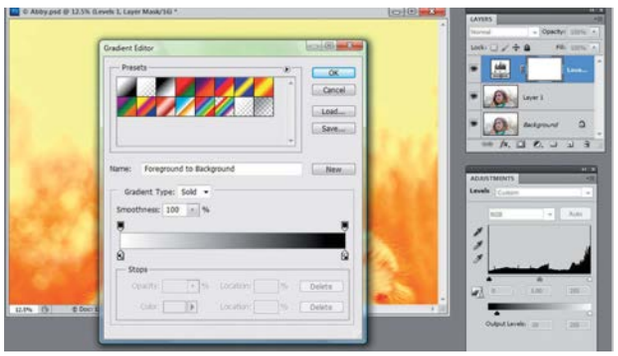
Tip

Boost the retro feel

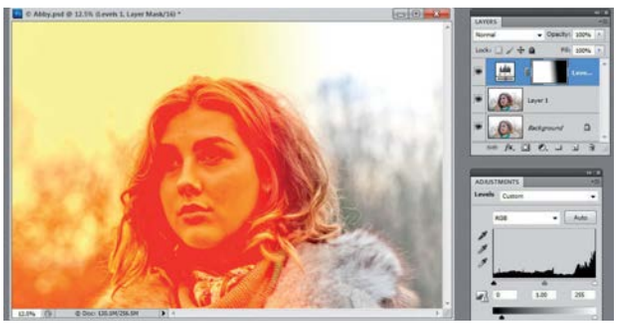
Since this is a classic photo effect, there's no harm in really embracing that retro feel. One way of doing this is to add some corner vignetting – typical of the toy camera look. To vignette, produce a merged duplicate by selecting the top layer and using Ctrl/Cmd+Alt+Shift+E, then go to Filter>Distort>Lens Correction. Select the Manual tab if there is one, and use minus amounts on the Vignette Amount slider to darken the corners up nicely.

FOCUS THE COLOUR

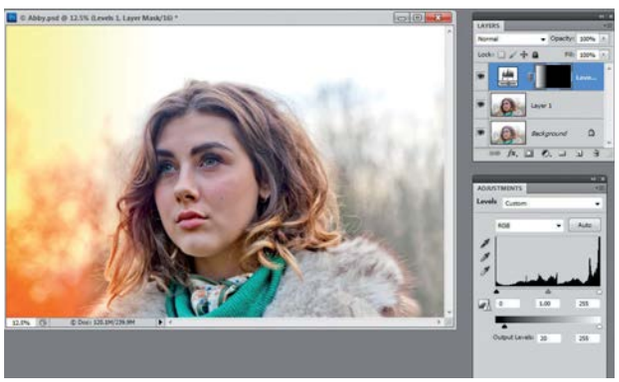
The Gradient tool is perfect for realistic light leak



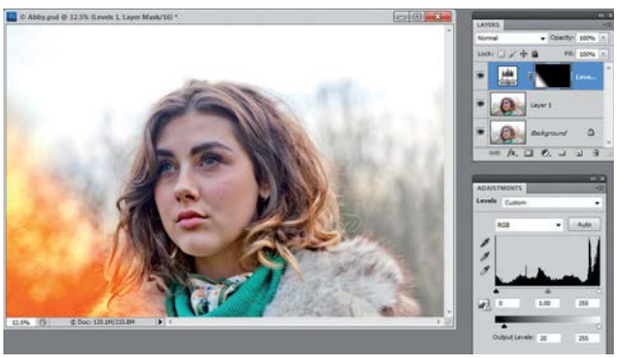
06 **Set up the Gradient tool** Now select the first of five icons in the Options bar (Linear Gradient) and click the gradient ramp drop-down menu. The Gradient Picker will appear. Choose the first swatch (Foreground to Background). Hit enter and then press D to reset the colour palette swatches to white and black.



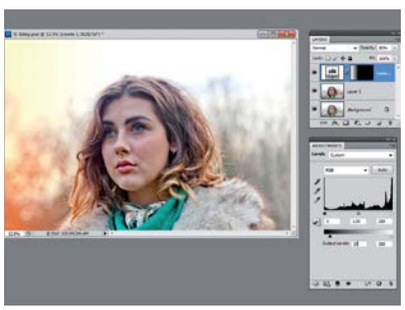
07 **Click, drag and release** With the Levels layer mask active, you need to click, drag and release to apply the gradient to the mask so that the light leak colour is localised. The area behind the first point where you click receives the full force of the adjustment and everything beyond where you release receives none. The area you draw in-between represents a gradient transition according to the option selected.



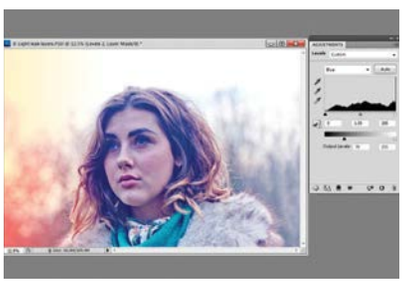
08 **A gradual fade** It's worth playing about to see how this works. To create a gradual fade from the edge to the model, click from the left edge and drag to the model's face. See how this gradient is represented on the layer mask in the palette.



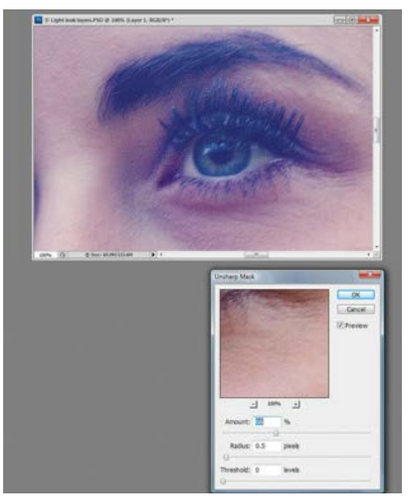
09 **Sharper transitions** Now try again, starting from half way between and finishing in the same place. The gradient is much sharper and the colour extends further into the shot. Notice the difference on the layer mask. Experiment with different length lines, starting and ending at different points. Try it from the corners too.



10 **The finished effect** When you've hit upon a gradient that you like and that's appropriate, you can control its strength using the layer Opacity slider in the Layers palette. We used a gradient from the image edge to the face edge and dropped layer Opacity to 60% for a more subtle result.



11 **Blue shadows** We're going to finish by throwing in a bit of a colour cast to give the image even more of a retro feel. Add a Levels adjustment layer and position it under the light leak Levels layer. Select Blue from the drop-down menu and push the black Output slider (bottom ramp) up to a setting of 70 to add a nice blue tone to the shadows.



12 **Yellow highlights** Next, move the white Output slider (bottom ramp) into a setting of 230 to add a little yellow to the highlights. Just a bit of sharpening left to do. Zoom in to 100%, select the duplicate Background layer and run Filter> Sharpen>Unsharp Mask. Set Radius to 0.5, and choose an Amount you think looks appropriate.

Tip

More colour control

Sometimes with light leak you may get a strip of red or orange and a strip of yellow that sit side by side, overlapping slightly. If you want to create that effect, use two Levels adjustment layers to create your colour, one using reds and the other yellows (with both containing fade in the RGB channel). Draw one gradient from the edge or corner, and then use the Reflected Gradient feature in the Options bar to draw the second colour next to and overlapping the first.

Add pow to your titles with this nifty trick

Use photos in type

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
Five minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Jo Cole

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

TYPE TOOL
CLIPPING MASKS
THE STROKE LAYER STYLE

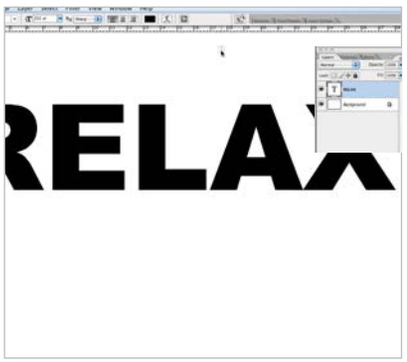
Clipping masks are a great way of placing objects inside other objects and can be used for all sorts of wild and wonderful things. Our example here may not be particularly wild, but it is a wonderful way of creating eye-catching titles.

The theory is simple; you begin with some type on a new document. You open up a photo, copy and paste a version of this into the type document and then use a clipping mask to make the photo magically appear inside the type. The most obvious use for this technique is in titles (it works especially well for fun digital scrapbooks and photobooks) or you could create an entire image made from text and photos.

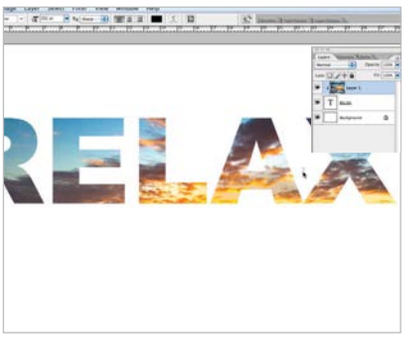
Quick tip: Don't be confined to type – use this technique to apply a photo to whatever shape or object you like

KICK BACK WITH A CREATIVE TEXT EFFECT

Three simple steps to combine word and image



01 Make your type Create a new document and select the Type tool from the toolbar. Go up to the Font area and click to see the available fonts. Pick one that is a bit chunky (you want to see the photo, after all!). Click on your document and type your word.



02 Photo time Open the photo you want to use, Select All and then Copy. Click back on your type document and Paste. It will appear above your type. Go to Layers>Create Clipping Mask and it will automatically cling to your text. You can reposition using the Move tool.

03 Outline To add more emphasis, double-click on the type layer to open the Layer Styles palette. Click the Stroke option at the bottom and then pick a colour and size. You can also return to the Background layer and use the Edit>Fill option to change the colour if you wish. We decided black would be more dramatic.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

Stylish photo frames

Learn how to use masks and create custom border effects to spice up your photographs

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
30 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Kirk Nelson

ON THE DISC
PaintStroke.jpg
Splatter01.jpg
10 custom frame files

For decades, photographers have known that one of the easiest ways to add spice and interest to a photo is to frame it. The very act of dressing the photo immediately elevates the visual appeal and often adds a much-needed finishing touch. And finding the right frame to enhance the mood and message is all part of the fun!.

In today's digital age, many people forget the importance of framing a photograph as it never makes it to print. If images are intended to be displayed digitally, usually they are frameless forever. But this doesn't need to be the case, and could in fact be to the image's detriment, as the very fact that you're working digitally introduces many more options for framing. The combination of effects is limited only by your imagination. In this short tutorial we will show you how to use Photoshop to create two very different frame effects using two very different techniques.

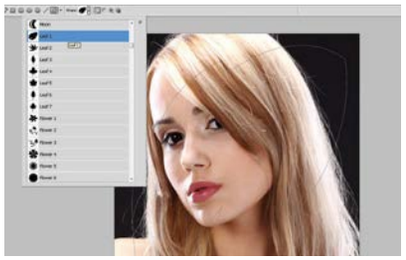
The first will show how to create an intricate vector frame in a floral style that can be scaled up to fit any image size with no loss of detail (as is the beauty of vectors). The second technique will show how to create a custom border based on scans of paint splashes and brushstrokes for a more organic, dynamic look.

It is worth noting that both techniques require the image to be on its own, non-Background layer. If your image is on the Background, simply double-click the layer name to change it to a regular layer and make it editable before you begin the steps.

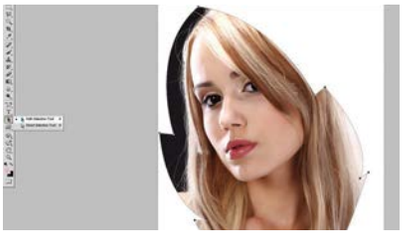
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS3 AND ABOVE

CREATE YOUR FAVOURITE FRAME STYLE

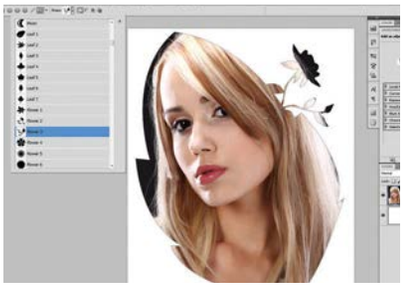
Use vector shapes or custom brushes for stunning borders



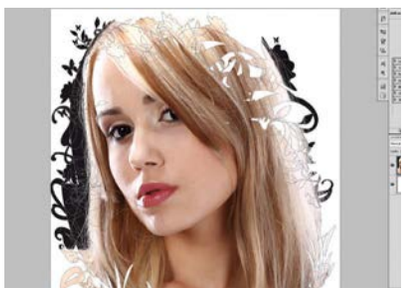
01 **Choose your path** Grab the Custom Shape tool (it's hiding behind the Rectangle shape tool). In the Options bar, press the icon for Paths instead of Shapes, then select a custom shape from the drop-down menu. Here, we used the Leaf 1 shape. Draw the shape over the part of the image you want to frame.



02 **Create the mask** Go to Layer>Vector Mask>Current Path to use the path to define the shape of the layer. Select the path using the Path Selection tool (the black arrow) and transform it as needed using the Edit>Transform Path commands. Use the Direct Selection tool (white arrow) to move or delete individual points.



03 **Additional shapes** Use the Custom Shape tool again, with the mode set to Add to Path Area to add more shapes to the frame. The shapes will all work together to form the frame, yet still be individual paths that can be selected, edited and copied.



04 **Fill out the frame** Continue adding and manipulating shapes until your frame is full. This technique makes it easy to create your shaped frame in as complex or simple a way as you want. Consider adding a Drop Shadow layer style for a bit more depth and an even more interesting effect.

05 **Create custom brushes** Open the files from your disc called 'PaintStroke.jpg' and 'Splatter01.jpg'. We'll use these scanned images to create our custom brushes. In each file, go to Edit>Define Brush Preset then close the files. You now have two, very high-resolution custom paint splatter brushes free for your own use.

06 **The humble layer mask** Open your photo, making sure it is not the Background layer. Add a new layer filled with black below the photo (or make the existing Background black). Click on the photo layer and create a rectangular selection. Press the Add Layer Mask button. This places a mask thumbnail next to the layer thumbnail.

07 **Use the custom brushes** Grab the Brush tool, set the paint colour to white, and use the PaintStroke preset defined previously as your tip. Be sure your Foreground is set to white. Open the Brushes palette (press F5) and adjust the size and angle to fit your image. Click on the canvas to deliver a paint stroke. Adjust the angle and stamp again until the entire frame is painted over.

08 **Add some flair** If you can still see the rectangular outline through the brushstrokes, reduce the brush size and carefully stamp out those areas. Then switch to the Splatter01 brush preset and repeat the process for some extra flair to your custom painted frame.

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- CUSTOM BRUSHES
- LAYER MASKS
- VECTOR MASKS

Tip

Use negative space

While creating shapes for the vector mask frame, the predominant effort is taken by shaping the visible area, or positive space. By changing the path mode to Subtract From Path Area, you can use the shapes to form negative space that cuts into the image instead. This can be used to create a more interesting effect and help direct the viewer's eye. In our example here, the grass shapes at the bottom of the frame use negative space.

Tip

Avoid a common mistake

A frequent blunder when painting on layer masks is to inadvertently paint on the layer itself and not the mask, as it's possible to do this and not even realise. Always be sure to click on the mask thumbnail to make sure that it is the active surface. As an extra safeguard, consider locking the layer itself by using the lock icon at the top of the Layers palette.

Animation palette

It's time to look at what Photoshop can do for the animator as we explore this dynamic palette in more detail

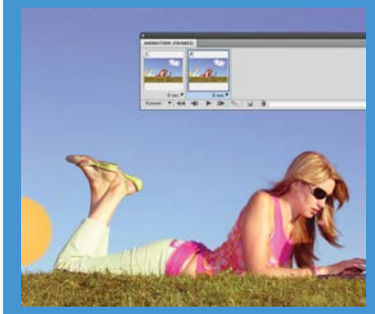
Photoshop and animation are two words that are rarely seen together, but since the merging of Image Ready with Photoshop a few versions back, animation in Photoshop has come a long way. It's especially noticeable in CS5 Extended, where the Animation palette has evolved into a refined timeline-based interface for creating interesting animated sequences.

Making an animation is not a scary process, and it can be as simple or as complex as you need it to be for your subject matter. Animations don't have to be feature length, either. They can be made to go on a website, for example, as part of a logo, or as a digital greetings card to send out to loved ones with fun, moving text and images. Practice is certainly key to mastering the Animation palette, but after the hard part is out of the way, it's all fun from there.

Here we dive into the centre of the Animation palette to discover what lies inside its deceivingly plain exterior. Working closely with your Layers palette, an animation works with Frames and the process of Tweening. With these skills acquired, you can make an object seem like it's on the move, dancing across your image. Follow the three steps opposite to find out the basics of Tweening, and by changing the number of frames in the Tween you can make your animation smooth or jagged, whichever takes your fancy.

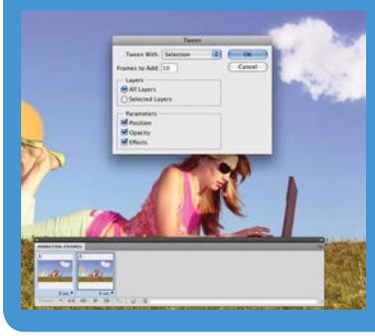
Making your subject move

In three steps, this is how an object can track across an image. You can make your own sun from scratch, or select one from a stock image instead and place it in.



01 New frame
Create an object on its own layer to animate. Open the Animation palette (Window>Animation) and click on the Duplicate button. This creates a new frame which will be the second in your animation.

02 Move object
Select this second frame and move the object to a different position from the first. If you're moving the object along a curved path or want a smoother motion, you need to move it in smaller increments.



03 Tween frames
When you've moved your object and are happy with it, highlight both frames and click on the Tween button. In the Tween menu that appears, add ten frames and hit OK to create an instant animation.

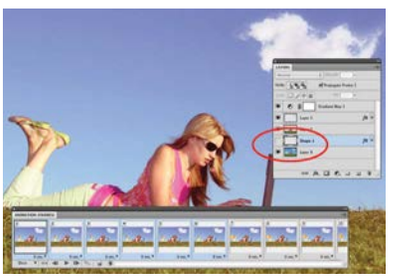
The beauty of GIF

Save your animations as a playable file

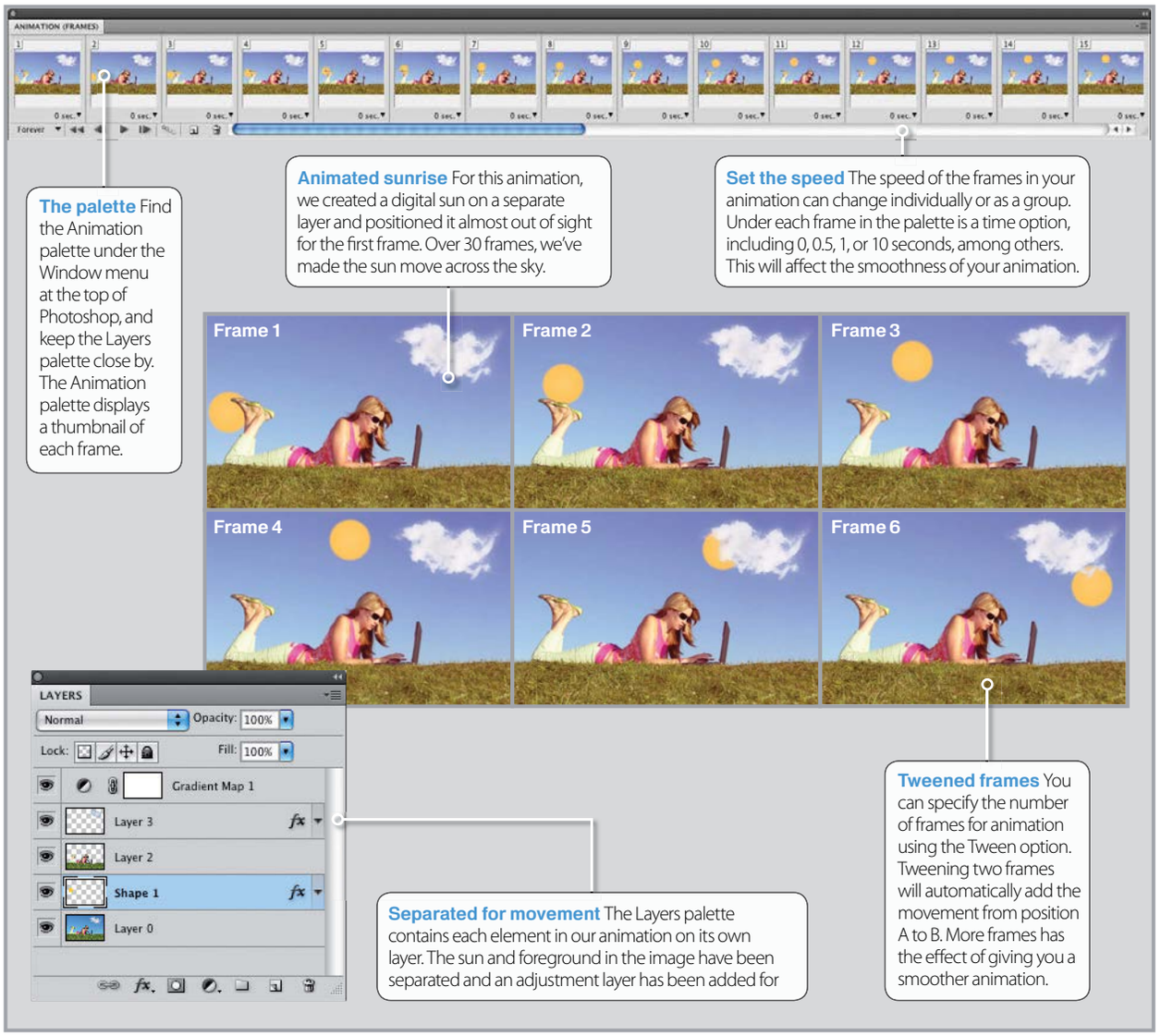
Animations made in Photoshop need to be saved as GIF files. A GIF is a versatile format and means your animation can be played back using a web browser or QuickTime, for example. To save your animation when it has been Tweened, go to File>Save for Web & Devices. A menu appears with numerous settings and file formats. Here you can see the final size of the animation's file, helping you to decide if you want to make it transparent or if you need to resize its dimensions because it's too large. You can also preview your animation in different colour profiles to get an idea of how it will look on the final screen. All that's left to do is to decide what you want to animate!

Hide and go animate

How to make certain frames disappear



Layers are a big part of animating in Photoshop. With the help of layers, you can turn on or off the particular parts of your images that you only want to see in certain frames. To change when a layer appears in your image, first select the frame in the Animation palette you want to see the layer during and then, holding Shift, click on the last frame you want the layer to appear in. With the required frames highlighted, go to the Layers palette and click on the eye icons of those layers to hide or show them.



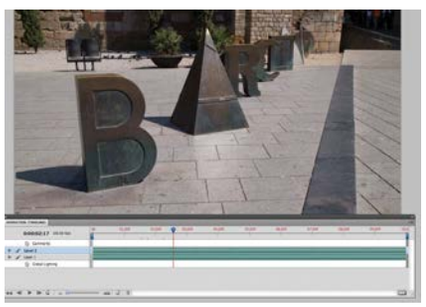
Tip

Changing thumbnail size

If the frames in the palette are too big or small, you can use the drop-down menu at the top right to adjust their size. This is especially handy if your animation is made up of many, many frames or just a small few.

Extended bonuses

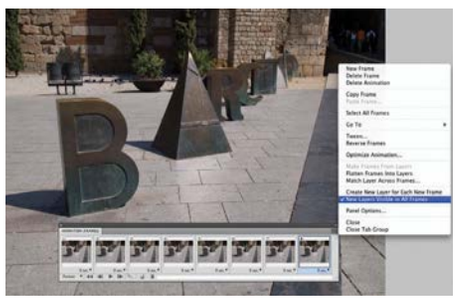
What CS5 Extended can do for your animation



In Photoshop Extended you can take extra pleasure in using a different view in the Animation palette, the Timeline mode. It's an alternative to the standard thumbnail frame view, where the duration of each layer is shown. Using the button at the base of the palette, these two modes can be switched around to suit your working preferences. It gives you a more detailed breakdown of what's happening in your animation and proves just how far this feature has come over the years in the later versions.

Auto-pilot framing

Change the way you want layers to perform



You can change how you want the Animation palette to affect your Layers palette. In the top right of the Animation palette is a small set of arrows that open up a menu. Inside here are the two options: Create New Layer for Each New Frame and New Layers Visible in All Frames. Toggling these two options will make sure you can control the behaviour of the animation, and makes editing frames much easier as you progress through a sequence.

Spring
1.00G
ANNUAL

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

4 hours

YOUR EXPERT

Kirk Nelson

ON THE DISC

StringScans.png
SeedScans.jpg
Splatter Brushes.abr
Stock photos of flowers and children

Scan and create a scrapbook

Celebrate the arrival of spring by crafting a beautiful, garden-inspired scrapbook page using custom resources

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- QUICK MASK MODE
- CUSTOM BRUSHES
- PUPPET WARP
- SMART OBJECTS

It's that time again; the time when spring makes its annual announcement and reawakens the world after the dark slumber of winter. A time for regrowth and new life. A perfect time to create a garden-inspired scrapbook!

We'll walk through using a variety of features to create a fresh and vibrant scrapbook layout. The approach of this tutorial is a bit different in that instead of a click-by-click direction for replicating the exact image we have here, we show you the techniques used in creating each element and encourage you to use them as resources for your own design. View the artwork here not as the goal of this tutorial, but merely one possible example of how to use these methods.

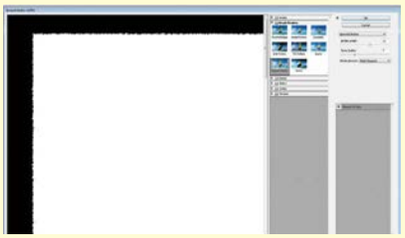
You'll need to grab the resources on the disc, and there's a lot there to use. Several images of flowers and children in a garden, scans of string and seeds and a custom brushes file to give you some stunning, high-resolution splatter brushes free to download and make the most of. Check out the 'Using the splatter brushes' boxout for more information on installing and using these brushes.

Before we begin, you will need to create a cloud file to use later on. Simply create a new file at 1,500 x 1,500 pixels and make sure your colours are set to default black and white. Go to Filter>Render>Clouds and then save this file as 'Clouds.psd'.

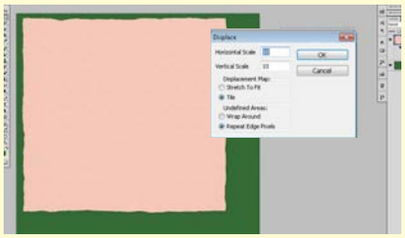
WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS5 (EARLIER VERSIONS ARE POSSIBLE WITH ALTERNATIVE TO PUPPET WARP TOOL)

SEEDS AND STRINGS AND OTHER THINGS

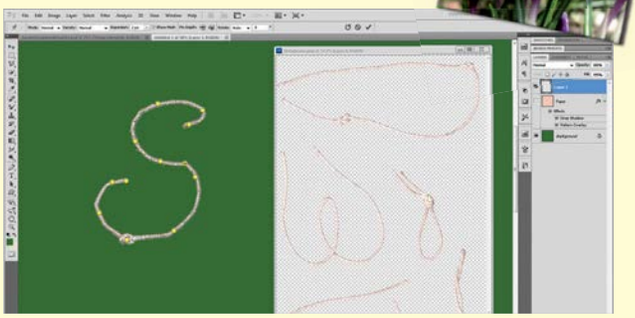
Create a custom header made out of string



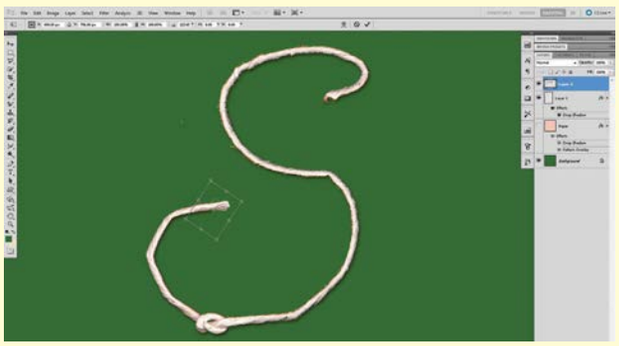
01 **Craft the paper** Begin with a nice large document about 300mm square. On a new layer, create a rectangular selection and press Q to enter Quick Mask mode. Go to Filter>Brush Strokes>Sprayed Strokes and use a Stroke Length of 12 and a Stroke Radius of 7. Press Q again to exit Quick Mask mode. Fill with a bright colour and cancel your original selection with Ctrl/Cmd+D.



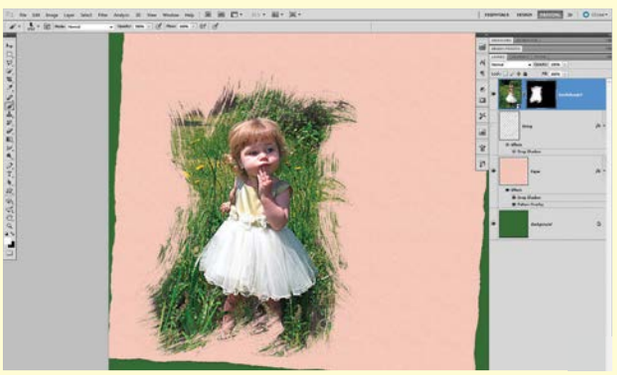
02 **Cloud displacement** Eliminate the perfectly straight edges by using Filter>Distort>Displace. Set a pixel value between 10 and 20 and when prompted for a displacement map, use the 'Clouds.psd' you created earlier. To complete the paper, open the Layer Style palette and add a Drop Shadow and Pattern Overlay set to Course Weave with the Overlay blend mode and Opacity set to 15%.



03 **Make the string letters** Open the 'StringScans.png' file. Use the Polygonal Marquee tool to create a selection of a portion of string. Copy and paste that into the main composition. Go to Edit>Puppet Warp and place several pins along the length of the string. Pull the pins into place to form a letter. If you haven't got CS5, use the Edit>Warp tools or Filter>Liquify, or cut out sections and piece together.



04 **Loose threads** The cut ends of the string require additional attention. Cut and paste an end area of string over the letter. Transform the end into place and use the Eraser to remove the sharp edge, allowing it to blend in with the rest of the string. Combine the string layers and add a drop shadow. Repeat the technique for each letter.



05 **Create the splashed photo** Drop in a photo as a new layer. Hold down Alt, and click the Add Layer Mask button in the Layers palette. This will hide the photo completely. Set the paintbrush to one of the new splatter brushes from the disc and, using the Foreground colour white, paint on the mask to reveal the photo in the brushstrokes.

Tip

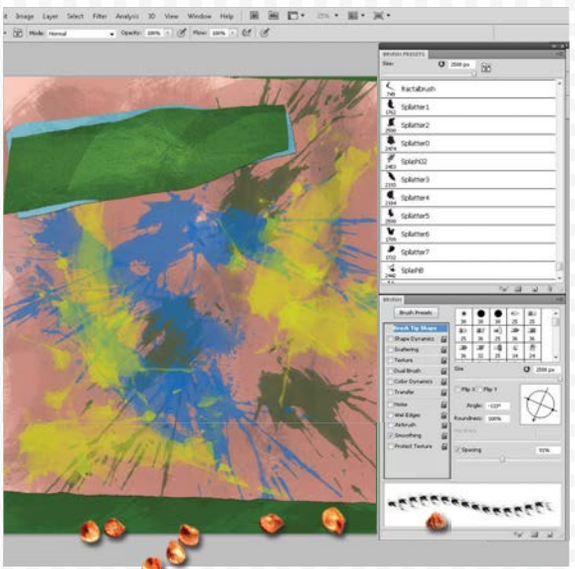
Quick Mask explained

The Quick Mask is a feature not often used in Photoshop, largely because there are other methods of accomplishing the same result. But there are certain times that Quick Mask really is the easiest path to your design destination. Essentially, this mode allows you to edit the selection itself instead of what is contained in the selection, so you can use the painting tools and run filters to craft a creative shape for your selection.

Using the splatter brushes

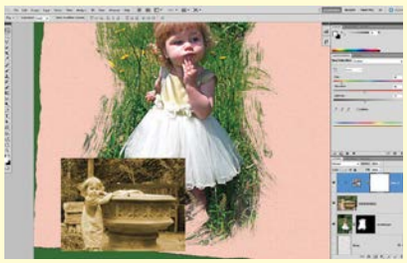
How to install these resources

Included in the resources on the disc for this project are a set of custom splatter brushes. To load these brushes, open your Brush Presets panel and in the fly-out menu (activated by hitting the tiny arrow button at the top right of the panel) select Load Brushes and point to the file called 'SplatterBrushes.abr'. The new brushes will be added to the bottom of your brush presets list. To use these effectively, don't drag on the canvas with your mouse or stylus, but rather use single clicks or dabs. Keep the Brushes palette open so you can easily adjust the size and angle of each brushstroke you apply.

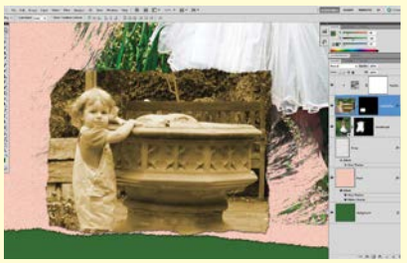


USE FLOWER PHOTOS FOR A VIBRANT DESIGN

Create a celebration of life and colour with masks



06 **Quick sepia tone** Drop another photo onto the project and use the Adjustments palette to add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Hold down Alt when you click the icon, and in the dialog box click the Use previous layer to create clipping mask option. Set the option for Colorize and use the set of values 42, 45, and -9 for a sepia tone.



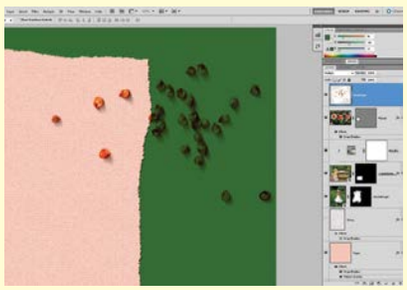
07 **Photo frame** Create a rectangular selection over the picture. Make sure the photo is the active layer and press the Add Layer Mask button in the foot of the Layers palette to create a mask from the selection. With the mask still targeted, use the Spatter, Sprayed Strokes and Displacement filters directly on the mask to roughen the edges of the photo.

08 **Flower photos** Deposit a flower photo onto the composition. Grab the Pen tool and set the mode to Paths (not Shapes) and outline the contour of the flower. Use this path as a vector mask by going to Layer>Vector Mask>Current Path. In the Mask menu, adjust the Feather setting to 2 pixels to soften the edge of this image as well.

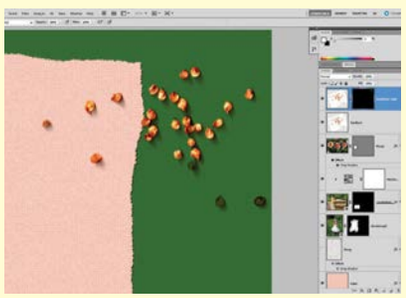
Tip

Work with Smart Objects

The seed packet design uses a Smart Object so that filters can be applied without flattening the layers. Another benefit is that it's easy to create several different packets by simply duplicating one then changing the images and text.



09 **Seedy effects** Open the 'SeedScan.jpg' file and select an area around a group of seeds. Copy and paste the seeds into the project as a new layer. Set the mode to Multiply to remove the white background. If the seed background is still visible, use Levels to increase the contrast until it disappears.



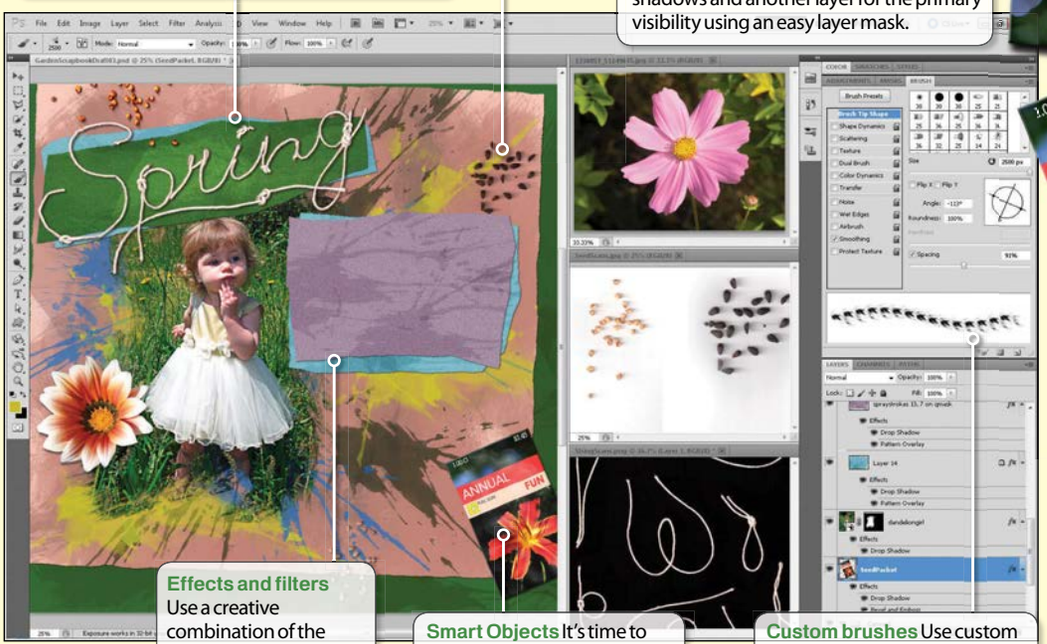
10 **Creative masking** Press Ctrl/Cmd+J to copy the seed layer. Set the blend mode to Normal and hold the Alt key while pressing the Add layer mask button to hide the entire layer. With the mask targeted, use a small round brush set to white to carefully reveal the seeds, being cautious not to reveal any of the white background.

Build a harmonious theme

Key techniques, methods and tools

Themed type Easy cut and paste paired with the powerful Puppet Warp can turn a scan of some simple string with loops into a creative header.

Design elements Place seeds into the design without complicated selections by using one layer set to Multiply for the shadows and another layer for the primary visibility using an easy layer mask.



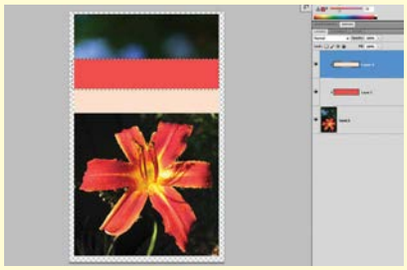
Effects and filters Use a creative combination of the Sprayed Strokes filter, Displacement maps and layer effects to create paper scraps to use as borders.

Smart Objects It's time to plant some fun. Illustrate your own realistic seed packets quickly and easily by using Smart Objects, then create custom duplicates in no time.

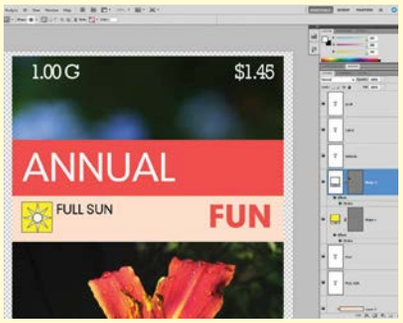
Custom brushes Use custom splatter brushes to create realistic grunge and paint effects. This works well for adding colourful strokes with the Dodge and Burn tools.

ADD ILLUSTRATED ELEMENTS

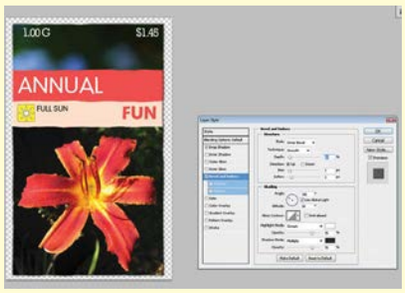
Make your own Smart Objects



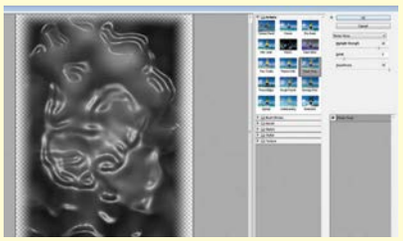
11 Create a seed packet Open a flower photo and create a tall, rectangular selection. Copy the area and paste it into a new document. To create the coloured stripes, add new layers and fill rectangular selections with a solid colour. Clipping the stripe layers to the photo layer will prevent the stripes from overstepping the border.



12 Packet text Add in text for the seed packet. If some of the text is difficult to read over the seed photo, add an Outer Glow layer style to help set it apart. The small sunshine icon can be found in the Custom Shape tool if you load the Nature shapes set.



13 Use a Smart Object Shift-click all the seed packet layers and go to Layer>Smart Objects>Convert to Smart Object. Then use the Displacement filter again to add some subtle distortion to the packet. The Drop Shadow and Bevel and Emboss layer styles will give depth to the packet illustration.

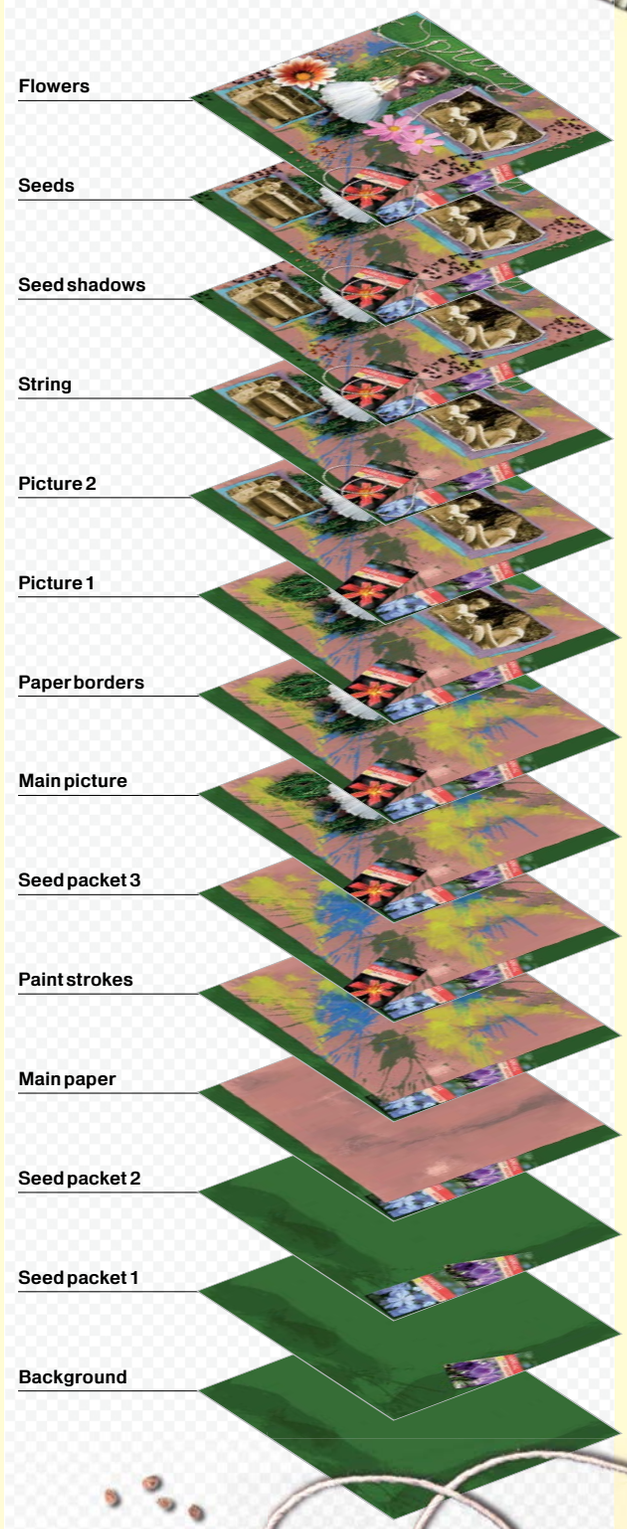


14 Packet highlights Create a clipped layer above the seed packet Smart Object. Set your colours to default and go to Filter>Render>Clouds. Then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and use a setting of 25 pixels. Go to Filter>Artistic>Plastic Wrap and use the settings of 16, 3 and 15, setting the layer's blending mode to Screen and reducing the Opacity to around 80%.

15 Final assembly Drop the seed packet onto the project file. Continue developing more elements to fill out the composition. For a final effect, use the custom splatter brush to add colourful paint splashes on separate layers. The same brushes can be used with the Dodge and Burn tools to add more interest to the other elements too.

Layer structure

How your garden grows



Light up the skies of your photos using downloaded resources

Set off some digital fireworks

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
Five minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Jo Cole

KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

- MAGIC WAND TOOL
- LAYER MASKS
- PASTE INTO COMMAND
- FREE TRANSFORM

Fireworks are always fantastic to watch but they are slippery customers when it comes to taking quality photos. If you haven't got a tripod you can forget about it but even if you have you aren't guaranteed a perfect shot. You need to get the timings just right, if there is pollution in the air you will just capture lots of smoke and if there are crowds you have that to contend with.

A far easier way is to create the fireworks in Photoshop and apply them to your photo. And the easiest way of all is to use fireworks that somebody else has made! We are using files from the Photoshop Daily site to add pizzazz to our sky.

Quick tip: Don't forget the reflections. Simply paste the firework onto the reflective surface and use a blend mode to make it look realistic

CREATE A CELEBRATORY SCENE

All of the pyrotechnics, none of the fuss

01 Select your area We are going to be copying and pasting the fireworks into a photo, using selections to control where the fireworks appear. The first task is to make that selection. The sky of our photo is pretty uniform in colour, so we just need to select the Magic Wand tool and click in the sky.

02 Add some fire Go to www.photoshopdaily.co.uk/news/firework-files and download the free firework files. These are PNG files, with all of the transparency intact. Open one up, Select All and then Copy. Click on your firework photo (making sure the selection is still intact) and go to Edit>Paste Into to incorporate it.

03 No overlap The firework will appear on a new layer, only in the area that was selected. Go to Select>Deselect and use the Move tool to place it where you like and the Edit>Free Transform command to alter the size and angle of the firework. To add more, Ctrl/Cmd-click on the layer mask thumbnail in the Layers palette to reselect. Open another firework file then Copy and Paste Into as before.

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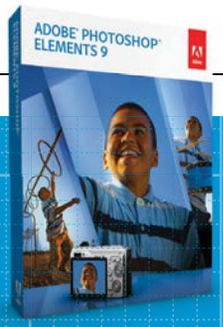


Q+A Photoshop Elements

Digital blizzard

Q How would you go about adding a blizzard to a shot? I'm trying to add dramatic streaks of wind blown snow to my image.
Bethany Cane

A Kick off by finding a suitable source image to add a blizzard to. Press D to set the Tool palette's Foreground and Background colours to the default black and white, then create a new layer. Choose Filter>Render>Clouds to fill the layer with a greyscale fractal cloud texture, then choose Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Set Amount to 200% to add particles to the cloud texture in the image. Apply the Gaussian Blur filter with a Radius of 4 pixels to soften the noise into clumps. At this stage, the clumps look too evenly spread, so to create a more random effect with the particles, go to Filter>Sketch>Ret iculation. Set the Density to 0, Foreground Level to 50 and Background Level to 21.

Tip

Cool off with Photo Filters

To make the first question's source image look colder, we added a Photo Filter adjustment layer to the shot. By setting the adjustment layer's drop-down menu to Cooling Filter (80), we were able to add a blue tint to the image and give it a chillier looking colour temperature. We used the Magnetic Lasso tool to select the edge of the tent and the brick wall backdrop behind it. The selection was then used to create a layer mask that replaced the wall with a snowscape image. This glimpse of the real snow helps to sell our computer-generated blizzard and sets the scene.

Add a blustery blizzard using filters and layer masks

Subtle snow

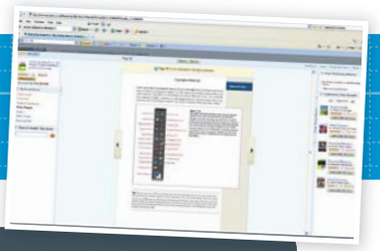
Make your CGI snow look more realistic

Once you've created a snow layer using the techniques described in the first question, reduce its Opacity to 67% to reveal more of the background. To add depth, create a new snow layer but use a different motion blur angle to add variety. To make the second snow layer look like it's blowing behind your subject, select the figure with the Magnetic Lasso tool. Press Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert the selection. Click on the Add layer mask icon and the second snow layer will become hidden where it overlaps the person.

Place snow layers in front and behind of the subject in your blizzard image

RESOURCES: BOOKS

Photoshop Elements 9: The Missing Manual by Barbara Brundage is an in-depth guide to all things Elements. Progress from the basics of 'Finding Your Way Around Elements' (chapter 1), right through to 'Elements for Digital Photographers' (chapter 8).
http://oreilly.com



Set the snow layer's blending mode to Screen to reveal the white particles and hide darker ones. To emphasise the lighter snow particles go to Enhance>Auto Levels and to create streaks of windblown snow go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set Angle to 10 degrees and Distance to 554 pixels. To make the streaks look buffeted by wind go to Filter>Distort>Liquify. Use the Twirl Clockwise tool to divert the snow streaks to make them blow around the person.
To make the white streaks look stronger while hiding darker pixels, click on the snow layer and choose Select>All. Choose Edit>Copy then click the Add layer mask icon. Alt-click on the mask to view it and the screen will turn white. Edit>Paste the copied snow onto the mask. The snow will now look brighter and you'll see more background details too.

Angelic effects

Q **I want to turn a shot of my niece into an angelic figure, with light radiating from her skin and clothing. How can I go about achieving this effect in Elements?**
Richard Victor

A Start by isolating your niece from her background. To do this, grab the Magnetic Lasso tool from the Tools palette and set the Feather option to 3 pixels. This will give the selection a soft edge, which will help make the subject's outline blend more effectively with a new background. Click to place an anchor point by her edge and then move the cursor around. Anchor points will automatically cling to her outline. If a point appears in the wrong place, let the cursor hover over it and press Backspace to delete. If the tool gets confused you can always click to place an anchor point manually.

Once you click the last anchor point next to the first, a selection marquee will appear. Choose Select>Inverse. Double-click on the Background layer in the Layers palette to unlock it. Choose Edit>Cut. The background will be replaced by transparent pixels. Edit>Copy a new background (like a cloudscape) and paste it onto a new layer.

Ctrl/Cmd-click on the figure's layer thumbnail to select her outline then click the Create a new layer icon. Choose Filter>Render>Clouds to add a texture to the figure-shaped selection. Press Ctrl/Cmd+D to deselect the marquee. Choose Enhance>Auto Contrast for whiter whites and blacker blacks. Go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and tick Zoom, setting Quality to Good and Amount to 46. This will create beams of texture radiating from the figure. Set the cloud layer's blending mode to Color Dodge. The darker cloud pixels will vanish, leaving magical, white light effects.

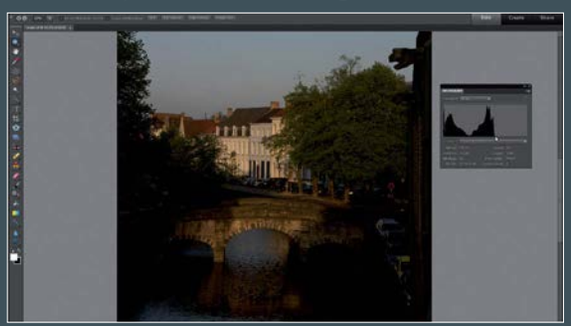
Create ephemeral beams of light using blending modes

HELPFUL HISTOGRAM

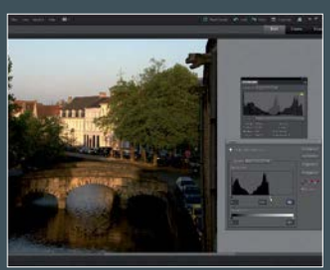
Get the perfect exposure

Q **I'm trying to get my head round how histograms help fix exposure problems. Can you help to make sense of it for me?**
Maurice Kinane

A Think of histograms as medical charts that indicate the exposure health of your photos. As well as diagnosing problems with a shot's exposure they can be used to fix them too. All tones in a photo are described by a numerical scale of Level values running from 0 (for the darkest shadows) through to 255 (for the brightest highlights.) Histograms show the spread and intensity of various tones using this scale.

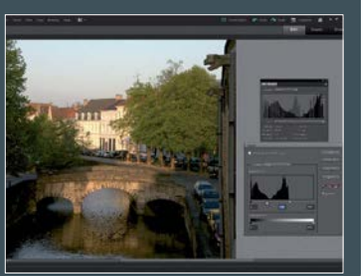


01 **Analyse the histogram** Go to Window>Histogram. In our example the shot has plenty of strong shadow pixels at the left of the histogram. With no information in the highlight section at the right, it shows that the shot is under-exposed.



02 **Fix highlights** Go to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels. This histogram has control points so you can remap the shot's highlight input levels to a stronger output by dragging the white triangle below the graph.

03 **Midtones** We can lighten some of the midtones by dragging the grey slider to the left to around 1.34. Click OK. The palette's graph now stretches from the far left to the far right, indicating a wider spread of tones.



Q+A Photoshop queries

DIVINE INTERVENTION

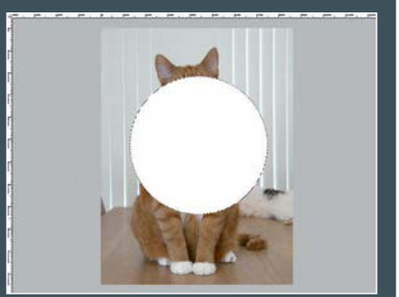
Say halo to my little friend

Q **I want to make a halo for a photomanipulation I'm working on, I've tried drawing one freehand but it just doesn't look right. Any tips?**

Scott Markovich

A It takes a steady hand to draw accurate shapes, but there's a much easier way using the Elliptical Marquee tool with a layer mask. To add to the angelic feel, we'll use a glowing layer style to finish the effect.

01 Draw the circle First, create a white circle on a new layer using the Elliptical Marquee tool. Press D to reset the swatch, then pull out a circle holding Shift. Fill this with white with the Paint Bucket tool.



02 Make the halo Go to Select> Modify> Contract to contract the selection. Add a Hide Selection layer mask (Layer>Layer Mask>Hide Selection) then use the Free Transform tool to turn the circle into an oval.

03 Add a glow After the halo has been positioned, add two layer styles; an Inner Glow with the blending mode Normal and Size 38, and an Outer Glow with a Screen blending mode, Spread of 18 and Size of 76.

Soft skin

Q **How would I go about smoothing skin using Photoshop? I've heard of people using the Blur tool but I can never seem to get good results.**

Dylan Johnston

A Smoothing skin is one of those tasks in Photoshop that can be achieved in many different ways, although taking an approach where you don't rely on one technique is best for tackling the problem. The Blur tool, as you suggested, works well, but over use can be disastrous. We can also use the Smudge tool to smooth out areas, and last but by no means least there are the Blur filters.

The Blur tool, set to a low strength, can be very useful in smoothing out wrinkles around the eyes and mouth. Gently stroke away from the edge of the eye or mouth following the contours of the line. The Smudge tool is very useful when we want to smooth out large areas of skin. If we are focusing on a face, set the Strength to a low figure – around 10% – and using the mouse (or stylus if you have one), smudge small circles smoothing out the skin. Finally using the Surface Blur filter (Filter>Blur>Surface Blur), set to a low Radius and Threshold, can give you effective, smooth-looking skin.

Using a selection of tools we can smooth out the deepest of wrinkles

Quick selections

Q **I really don't get on well with the Pen tool, are there any other ways of selecting in Photoshop?**

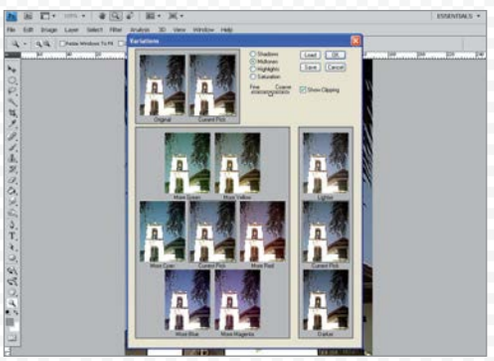
Alice Nixon

A The short answer here is yes. Photoshop offers us many different ways of selecting. As you said in

Variations command

One-stop shop for image adjustments

The Variations command can be found under Image> Adjustments>Variations and lets you easily adjust the colour balance, contrast and saturation of any image. The tool creates thumbnails showing alternative variations of the image you are working on. These thumbnails can then be clicked to apply the effect on your image. Further options allow you to edit the shadows, highlights and midtones of the image and allow you to adjust the dark areas, the light and the middle areas too.



The Variations command lets you easily adjust the tonal range of an image with preview thumbnails

RESOURCES: PHOTOSHOP BRUSHES GROUP

We are a firm believer that you can never have enough brushes. The deviantART Brushes group offers a phenomenal range of brushes and effects, including smoke, reptile skin, grunge, flowers and tattoos.
http://brushes.deviantart.com

We can use the Quick Mask tool to easily create selections

Use layer styles to give objects a 3D effect

your question, we can use the Pen tool and though this is a good option, it is often tricky to get used to. Other solutions include the Marquee tools, the Lasso tools, the Magic Wand, the Quick Selection tool or Quick Mask. The Quick Mask mode paints in a selection and is very useful as you can even use other selection tools along with it.

We access the Quick Mask mode by pressing Q on the keyboard, then as if we were using a layer mask, set the Foreground swatch to black to mask, and Foreground set to white to remove the mask. As you paint, you will see that everything masked will be a pinky colour instead of the black that is set in our Foreground swatch, and this is the mask. When we have finished we simply press Q again, and this will bring us out of Quick Mask mode. You will notice that the selection is inverted – that it is the background rather than the subject that is surrounded by the marching ants – and we fix this by inverting the selection via Select>Inverse.

3D from 2D

Q **Hi, I've been struggling with a problem for the last few weeks but I just can't seem to figure out how to make a flat object look more 3D.**
Alex Whitehead

A The best way of making an object look 3D is with shading and highlights. The Dodge tool will produce highlights while the Burn tool will produce shading. These tools can also affect certain ranges of colours, for example setting the range to Shadows will affect only the darker pixels. We can also take advantage of layer styles for interesting effects. Adding a Drop Shadow (Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow) to an object will make it stand out from its background, and adding a Bevel and Emboss style (Layer>Layer Style>Bevel and Emboss) will add extra highlights and shadows to an object, producing a 3D effect.

Tip

Liquify filter

Filters are one of those things that people either love or hate, although most will agree they are very useful if used sparingly. One of the most interesting is the Liquify filter (Filters>Liquify), which lets you manipulate photos. The Liquify filter allows you to push, pull, rotate, reflect, pucker and bloat any part of an image. One of the effects that this filter can be used for is to produce caricatures by exaggerating facial features such as the nose, chin and ears or even distort parts of the body as well such as the arms and legs.

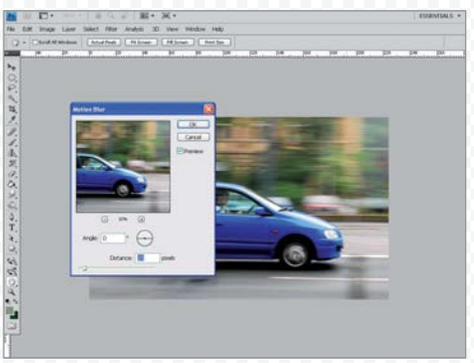
Artistic filters
Dry Brush

The Dry Brush filter is located in the Artistic Filters sub-menu, and creates a simplified version of an image, reducing the tonal range to that of areas of common colour, and there are three options that can be adjusted. Brush Size controls how big the brush is; a smaller brush would give more details. The second option, Brush Detail, controls the realism of the effect ranging from impressionistic to more realistic. The final slider adds detail and texture.

This filter creates an effect as if traditionally painted with a dry brush

Blur filters
Motion Blur

The Blur filters are used to soften up either a selection or an entire image, and are very useful when creating a soft effect or depth of field. The Motion Blur filter can be found by going to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur and creates an effect as if photographing a moving object. It allows us to specify the direction of the blur – from -360° to +360° – as well as the intensity from 1 to 999. We can also preview the effect before we commit to the changes by ticking the Preview box.



Simulate a dynamic photograph of a moving object with the Motion Blur filter

A-Z of Photoshop

Get to grips with Photoshop's D-lightful features and discover new ways to enhance images

Distort filters

As well as the Distort tool, Photoshop has another distorting method within the Filter menu. By selecting Filter>Distort, a sub-menu of filters appears for you to use to produce some interesting effects. As many of the filters in this area are pretty powerful and can completely change your image, it is worth making a copy of the layer you are working on so that any changes are non-destructive. One of the filters found under the Distort sub-menu is Polar Coordinates. This feature works by taking the two sides of an image and wrapping them around to meet each other, and produces a warped result. Spherize, another filter found in this area, is the ideal choice for creating a bulging, circular effect that is similar to looking at the image through a curved lens. A practical use for one of the filters in this set is producing the reflection of an image on a bed of water. Choose Filter>Distort>ZigZag and then select Pond Ripples from the Style drop-down menu. Adjust the Amount and Ridges sliders to suit your picture and then click OK. The image can then be placed on a bed of water as if it was a reflection. There are plenty of other filters to experiment with in the Distort menu such as Glass, which makes your photo appear as if it is being viewed through a window or other solid, transparent surface.

The Polar Coordinates filter transforms this fireworks shot into a more artistic image

Distort tool

The Distort tool enables you to change an image's shape. When working with a photograph that just contains a Background layer, duplicate it. Now you have a separate layer to work on whilst keeping your original untouched. Choose Edit>Transform>Distort to make handles appear. By clicking and dragging at the edges of the image, you can stretch the bounding box for different distortions.

Dragging the handles when using the Distort tool can change the shape of buildings

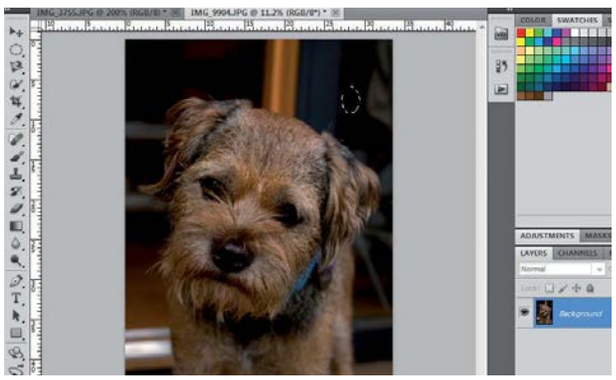
Tip

Dithering about

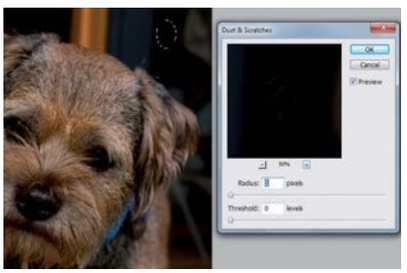
When working with the Gradient tool in Photoshop, banding over long gradients can be minimised at the click of a button. With the Gradient tool selected, make sure that you have checked Dither in the top Options bar. The colours within your gradient will transition much more smoothly.

DUST & SCRATCHES FILTER

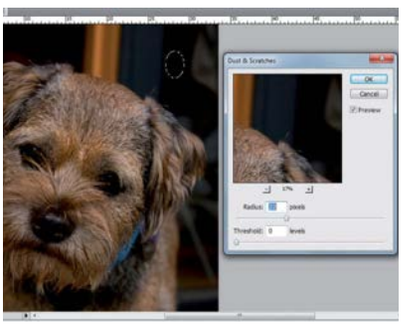
Give your scanned photos a quick spring clean



01 **Select the dusty area** If you are working with scanned images, when inspecting them in Photoshop you may come across specks of dust that were either on your lens, on the photographs themselves or on the scanner bed. Rather than applying a filter to the whole photo, use the Marquee tool to select the area of the image in which the dust speck or scratch appears.



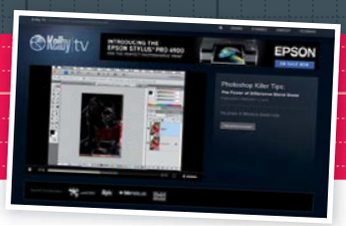
02 **Increase the Radius** Select Filter>Noise>Dust & Scratches. If you want to see a less or more magnified view of your photo, then click on the plus and minus buttons below the preview window. Drag the Radius slider up until the dust or scratches begin to disappear. Now increase the Threshold slider – keeping an eye on the preview – to a setting at which the specks are removed without affecting the image.



03 **Dust deletion** The Radius setting changes the amount of noise that will be merged with the background whereas the Threshold setting is used to choose how much variation the background pixels in the image have in relation to the dust specks. If a low setting is chosen, then smaller variations in pixels would be considered dust or scratches.

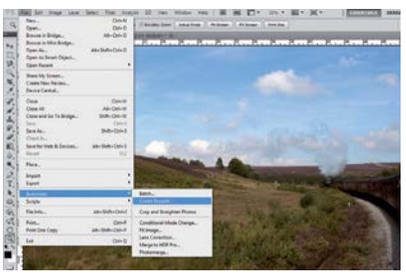
RESOURCES: TUTORIALS

In this video tutorial, image-editing expert Matt Kloskowski demonstrates how useful the Difference blending mode can be when trying to combine two photographs of a couple, where each person looks their best in a different photo.
http://kelbytv.com/photoshopkillertips/2010/02/04/the-power-of-difference-blend-mode



Discover the timesaving benefits of droplets

If you are keen to save time when applying the same changes to a large number of images, then droplets could be your new best friend. They are files created in Photoshop that can be added to your desktop, or a folder, and enable a set of adjustments made to one image to be applied to a collection of other photographs. To create a droplet you first have to get to grips with making an action in Photoshop. Begin by bringing up the Actions palette by choosing Window>Actions. Click the New Action button in the Actions window and then enter a name for it. Click the Record button in the bottom of the Actions palette and carry out the adjustments on your photograph. You may want to resize the image by choosing Image>Image Size and then entering new dimensions. Other adjustments can be made to the photograph using tools such as the Levels control, or perhaps you want to remove all of the colour from the photograph by choosing Image>Adjustments>Desaturate. Finally, you could save the file in a different format to the one it is currently in and then close it. All of these steps will have now been recorded as an action. Once you have finished, click the Stop button at the bottom of the Actions palette to stop the recording. Now choose File>Automate>Create Droplet. In the dialog box that appears you can then specify where to save the droplet by clicking the Choose button. Next you must head over to the Action drop-down menu and select the action that was just created. Once you have clicked OK, you can navigate to your droplet in the location you saved it. Now any images that are dragged and dropped onto the droplet will have the adjustments of the action you created applied to them. For example, if you selected five images from one of the folders on your desktop and then dragged them onto the droplet, they would open in Photoshop, the adjustments would be carried out and then they would be saved in the format specified in the action.



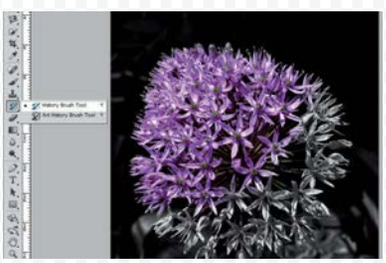
Droplets make applying changes to multiple images quick and simple

"If you are keen to save time when applying changes, droplets could be your best friend"

Be selective when desaturating

Enhance your image by removing colour

Desaturating an image by choosing Image>Adjustments>Desaturate in Photoshop converts it to greyscale values while keeping it in the colour mode. However, more attractive effects can be created within a photograph if desaturation is applied to just a selected area. Some parts will remain in colour and will be more prominent compared to the rest of the black and white image. An easy way to do this is to desaturate the whole photograph and then use the History Brush tool to paint areas of the image that you want to be in colour.



Make areas of your image more prominent using selective desaturating

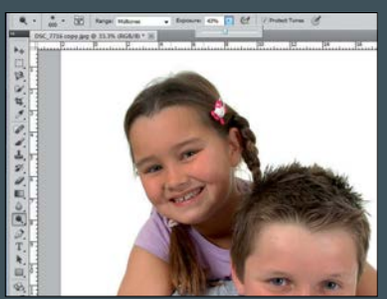
THE DODGE EFFECT

Improve image highlights

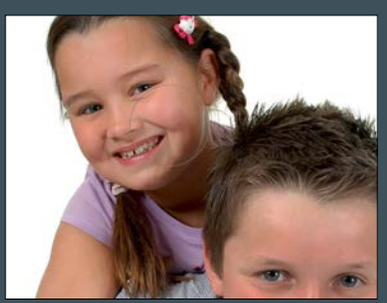
Using the Dodge tool has the opposite effect to the darkening results of the Burn tool, as the tonality is lightened with each stroke of the mouse. You have the option to either lighten the highlights, midtones or shadows of an image.

01 Dodge away Select the Dodge tool. If another tool is already selected, it may be necessary to click and hold down to choose the Dodge tool from the fly-out menu that appears.

02 Choose the pixels In the Range drop-down you can specify Highlights, Midtones or Shadows, then in the Options bar, select brush options including Size and Hardness.



03 Alter the strength By adjusting the Exposure slider you will change the strength of the lightening effect. You can create a subtle look by clicking the button to enable airbrush.



04 Lighten up Now you have chosen the settings for your Dodge brush, click in the areas of the image you want to lighten. Here we lightened areas of the face to improve exposure.

PLUG-INS

Change your photographs into elaborate engravings made up of geometric patterns with this clever plug-in

AlphaPlugins Engraver II

info

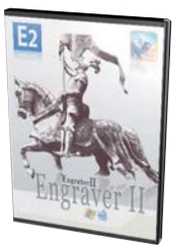
COMPANY
AlphaPlugins

WEB
www.alphaplugins.com

PRICE
£33.69 (excl. VAT)

OPERATING SYSTEM
Windows (32 or 64-bit)

Mac OS X for Photoshop CS3 (32-bit), CS4 (32-bit) and CS5 (32 or 64-bit)



You do not have to become a master craftsman to produce images that resemble hand-made engravings. AlphaPlugins's Engraver II is a multifaceted tool that can do all the hard work for you, with the power to transform photographs into images that are made up of a variety of geometric shapes such as lines, dots, waves and rings. Launched directly from Photoshop's Filter menu, Engraver II is easy to use with a clearly laid out interface. By holding the cursor over any of the settings, a brief description of its function appears, which comes in very handy when fine-tuning the effect applied to an image.

The plug-in's powers are not just limited to producing images made up of lines to create the engraved effect. The Pattern drop-down menu lists other options such as spirals, rings and waves. By checking the Use Dots box, a photograph can be made up of different sized dots too, producing a Pop Art or offset printing effect.

Some of the most useful settings in the plug-in are Space, Width, Randomness and Amplitude. Once you have got to grips with these, producing different types of engraving effects is a breeze. If the image is made up of lines, then adjusting the Space slider simply affects how closely packed together they are, and increasing the Width slider will make the lines thicker. Amplitude comes into its own when Waves is chosen from the Pattern drop-down menu as it changes their height. For a more natural looking effect, it is worth experimenting with the Randomness setting as this produces random distortions. In a similar way, cranking up the Noise slider slightly makes the final image look more realistic and reduces artefacts that can appear when creating this kind of effect.

Even though the plug-in allows control over the effect that is created, it does lack in the versatility of its preview window. It is possible to drag a square in the source preview window to choose the area to be displayed with the effect applied in the other preview pane. However, it would be useful to have the option to zoom out and quickly preview the effect of the settings on the image as a whole instead.

Users have the ability to choose different colour schemes, patterns and presets and experiment with a selection of more advanced settings

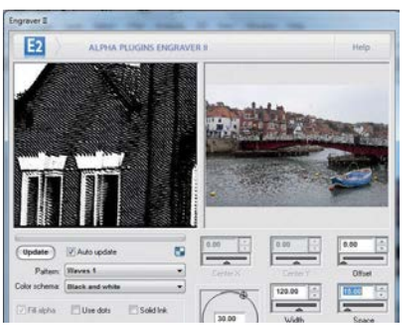
It would also be handy to include an Undo or Back button to work your way back through the last adjustments made to the sliders. There is a Last Used Settings option but this reverts back to previously saved settings. A further feature that would make it easier to visualise the effects of different

Tip

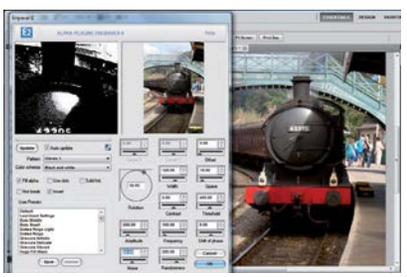
To produce a more extreme result, be sure not to ignore the Rings and Spirals settings that can be found under the Pattern drop-down menu and within the User Presets list. By experimenting with the different presets on offer or adjusting the setting's sliders, subtle or more over-the-top effects can be achieved using the geometric shapes.

EXPERIMENT FOR A HOST OF ENGRAVING EFFECTS

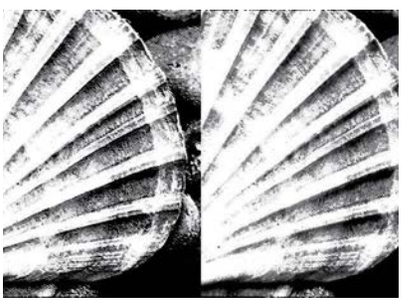
Engraver II does not scrimp on the settings to produce beautiful engravings



01 Adjust and fine-tune Engraver II is packed with sliders you can adjust to fine-tune the look of the lines and geometric patterns that make up an engraving. For example, by moving the Space slider, the distance between elements is changed whereas the Contrast setting will give the image more impact if increased.



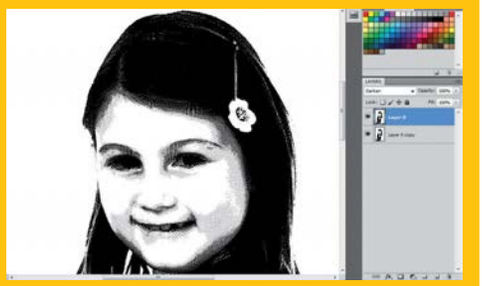
02 A more realistic engraving The Noise setting within Engraver II allows you to make your engraving look more realistic and natural. By increasing it, the image will look more similar to the way that real engravings blur and the ink spreads. As long as you do not go over the top with this setting you will also reduce any unwanted blips or artefacts that can appear in images made up of geometric patterns.



03 Make it random Be sure not to ignore the Random setting as it is the key to making an engraving look like it has been hand cut. Cranking up the slider slightly will distort lines and make them look more natural. In the above images the difference in effect can be seen between an image with the Random slider increased (left) and one where the slider is left untouched at 0 (right).

APPLY THE FILTER TO MULTIPLE LAYERS

Duplicate an image on a new layer and apply slightly different settings



Impressive results can be produced when working on multiple layers and using blending modes

Thanks to the tutorial on AlphaPlugins's site, we discovered some rather interesting results could be produced when applying the filter to an image and then applying it again with slightly different settings to a copy of the image on a different layer. In this example we applied the plug-in set to Waves 1 in the Pattern drop-own menu. The Space slider was at 15, Width at 120, Rotation at 30, Threshold at 400, Randomness at 250 and Amplitude set to 200. This was repeated on a copy of the original image on a separate layer, but instead of the Rotation being set at 30, it was increased to 330. The Blending Mode of the top layer was then set to Darken in Photoshop.

Learning to juggle sliders for settings such as Random and Noise can produce natural results that look like a hand-made engraving

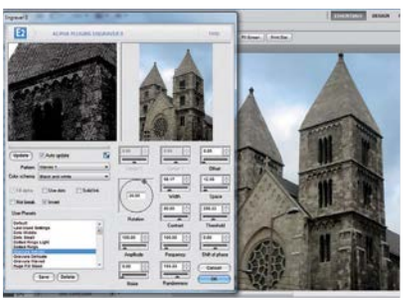
areas of the plug-in and its presets would be a thumbnail gallery. The ability to see small images with different variations of presets (similar to Photoshop's Filter Gallery) would be a big help in using this tool.

Those that are after a quick way to magically change a photograph into an engraving will find the presets valuable. They are a great way to learn what the results of moving the various sliders will be as when a preset is chosen, the sliders move to the position they should be in to create that type of effect. With 38 different presets, there are more than enough to choose from whether you want the image to be made up of regular waves or dotted rings.

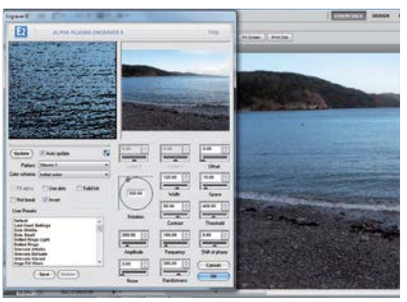
Although black and white engravings look dramatic and can have a lot of impact when the Contrast slider is used correctly, the plug-in also allows colour engravings to be made by choosing between the two colour options from the Color schema drop-down menu. Opting for the Initial Color schema means the original colour from the photograph will be maintained, which is perfect if the aim is to produce a less dramatic engraving. Split Color, on the other hand, gives a more unrealistic look. Remember that the plug-in is not just for digital images and you can get craftier with your engraving after you have experimented in Photoshop. The graphics created within Engraver II can then be used to burn onto wood or for screen-printing.

"WITH 38 DIFFERENT PRESETS, THERE ARE PLENTY TO CHOOSE FROM WHETHER YOU WANT THE IMAGE MADE OF REGULAR WAVES OR DOTTED RINGS"

04 Opt for dots There are plenty of ways you can adjust an engraving that is made up of lines, but the plug-in offers other options too. By checking Use Dots, the image will be made up of dots of a variety of different sizes. From here it is possible to alter the appearance of the dots in the same way as you would with lines and create a Pop Art or offset printing effect for your image.



05 Save time with presets Although it is lots of fun to experiment with the different settings in the plug-in, there is a quick way to produce a variety of engraving effects. Move over to the User Presets area and you will find plenty of presets to choose, from Waves Regular through to Dots Small. Any settings that you are particularly fond of can also be saved in this area.



06 Add some colour Engravings produced in the plug-in do not just have to be in black and white. As well as the colour presets, the image can appear in colour by choosing Split Color or Initial Color from the Color schema drop down menu. This is handy if you just want to apply a slight engraving effect while keeping the look of the image similar to the original photo.

PROS

- Allows creation of colour and monochrome effects
- Useful creative preset options
- Multiple ways to personalise engraved images

CONS

- Restricting preview window
- No ability to undo
- Lacks preset thumbnails

VERDICT

8.0

Includes the right amount of settings to create a variety of engraving effects with the added bonus of some very attractive preset options

HARDWARE

View your Photoshop artwork in widescreen proportions with BenQ's affordable display

BenQ VW2420H

info

COMPANY
BenQ

WEB
www.benq.com

PRICE
£199 (RRP)

SPECS
Resolution: Full HD 1,080p

Type: VA LED display

Contrast ratio: 3,000:1

Size: 24-inch, 16:9 widescreen

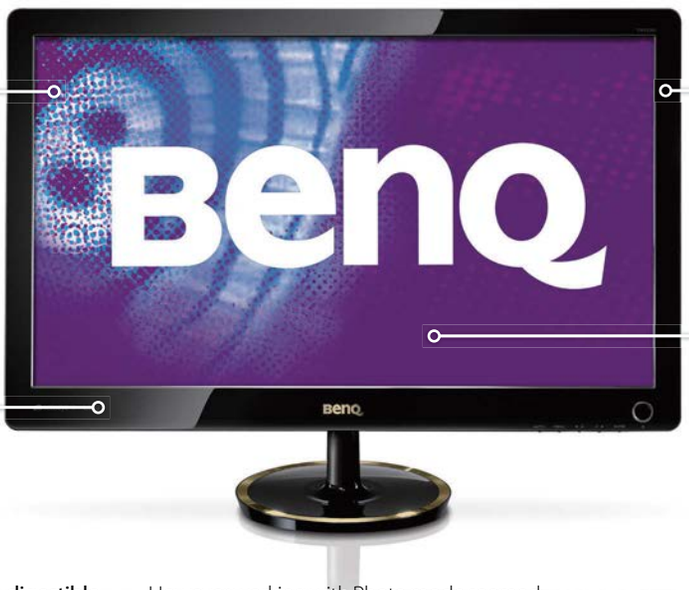
PROS
- Excellent contrast and vibrancy
- Affordable price point
- Compact and widescreen dimensions
- Full HD resolution

CONS
- No option for turning it to portrait

VERDICT

9.0

A nice looking model that's ideal if this is your first Full HD display



Space saver At 24 inches and with a space-conscious stand, the display is easily moveable around your desk.

Sleek finish This one's a looker from BenQ, with a glossy black exterior and a bright LED display. The VW2420H scores high on appearance.

Affordable price It's all about value for money, as the VW2420H produces good results if this is your first buy.

Calibration It's worth calibrating the display for a better colour profile, however, and using the on-board Senseye 3 presets and adjustments you can tweak output as needed for your work.

The VW2420H has a digestible price of £199, and bearing in mind that online stores are competing heavily with each other, you probably won't struggle too hard to find the display for a lot less.

To start with, the display is a 24-inch widescreen LED, at Full HD 1,080p resolution. The screen is held up by a small, circular base and the unit is impressively thin and lightweight. Unfortunately, working in landscape mode is your only option with the VW2420H, and with it having a non-adjustable height, you may feel somewhat restricted depending on your working style.

Showing off a black mirror finish all the way around, the display draws the visual attention it rightly deserves. Although BenQ has not equipped its display with as many gizmos when put next to competitor models from leading brands such as EIZO or NEC, it still has a selection of its own hidden gems. Its native contrast ratio of 3,000:1 gives a lot of punch to colours in your working profile. BenQ's special feature is Senseye 3 technology that uses six calibrated display modes to suit the type of subject you're working with. Presets include Standard, Movie, Game, Photo, sRGB and Eco.

However working with Photo mode seemed to buckle under the pressure of displaying transitions in gradients, producing patchy results. Switching the screen to sRGB mode resolved the issue of low-quality gradients. Running the Auto Adjustment sharpens up the graphics, and all in all the display was a pleasure to use. Take into account this is a VA (Vertical Alignment) display, as opposed to a budget TN panel, and the level of depth in black areas is at a high standard, producing a rich, deep colour dynamic. The unfortunate behaviour of the VA display, however, is its colour shift and loss of contrast if you find yourself looking at it from an angle, even if only slight.

When it comes to upgrading your display, finding a bargain is always appreciated. And that's exactly where the VW2420H fits in the grand scheme of things. It's an affordable display for beginner artists looking to upgrade from a run-of-the-mill PC monitor. It produces dynamic results, and if you were to bag yourself a display with more adjustments and technologies, the price brackets quickly soar past the £500 mark. BenQ has designed a cool, classy-looking display, and sandwiched a whole host of impressive attributes inside its very thin frame.

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Senseye 3 BenQ's Senseye 3 technology lets you choose from six preset modes, including Photo and sRGB. We recommend sticking to the latter.

Connections Things are kept simple with a single HMDI, D-Sub, DVI-D and headphone jack connections at the rear. The fewer cables the tidier the desktop!

Auto adjustments Apart from the menu controls for brightness, contrast and colours, there is a function for aligning the screen for optimum sharpness.

Ultra-high contrast ratio The display also has a huge dynamic contrast ratio of 20,000,000:1, coming into its own with extreme lighting.

HARDWARE

How does this entry-level product perform under pressure?

Genius MousePen M508W

info

COMPANY
Genius

WEB
www.geniusnet.co.uk

PRICE
£129.98

SPECS
Size: 5 x 8-inch working area

Resolution: 4,000lpi

Pressure sensitivity: 1,024 levels

Compatible: PC and Mac

PROS
- Wireless pen and mouse to ten metres
- Thirteen programmable function keys
- Good sized working area
- Affordable

CONS
- Uninspiring design
- Scratchy feel to the working area

VERDICT
6.0
Ideal for beginners, but it has a low build quality and dull design

The M508W is Genius's only wireless graphics tablet, taking the limelight from USB-dependent models to offer something different under the £130 mark.

This entry-level tablet offers no surprises in terms of internal workings, using 1,024 levels of pressure sensitivity and a resolution of 4,000lpi. It has a working area of 5 x 8 inches to give you a decent space to traverse your canvas. The tablet's best weapon, however, is its wireless connection. Although it comes with a USB alternative, it's more fun using its wireless dongle. The tablet runs on battery power, as does its stylus and the supplied wireless mouse. Combined with its lightweight build, the entire kit can be moved so you can use the tablet away from your screen and continue to make edits (up to ten metres). Ideal for presenting your work to others, therefore, or even presenting a lecture or two. The tablet also has a built-in pen holder to keep it all up together with the main unit.

"THE ENTIRE KIT CAN BE MOVED SO YOU CAN USE THE TABLET AWAY FROM YOUR SCREEN"

The M508W has a number of programmable shortcut buttons so you won't find yourself jumping to and from your keyboard to perform simple commands such as opening a new document or saving out. The tablet's software not only lets you customise these four express keys, but also allows you the freedom to adjust a number of settings for the tablet's stylus sensitivity, as well as changing the aspect ratio and the tablet's working dimensions.

If aesthetics play an important role in your decision to buy a new tablet however, the M508W might make you stop and think at this point. In our opinion, the rigid design make the tablet look as though it belongs more in an office environment than a creative's studio.

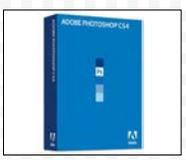
Painting with the tablet isn't the most fluid experience, but it's important to bear price in mind. It can be difficult to produce the subtle variations of pen pressure painting, but it's practical and removes the stress of producing quick or simple artwork.

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Express commands There are four express keys on the M508W that allow you to assign commands using the Media Settings window.

Wireless set-up It's dead easy to initiate the tablet's wireless function. Plug in the supplied dongle, install the batteries and you're all set.

Supplied accessories The tablet comes with two spare nibs to use with its stylus (as well as a dedicated nib remover), in case they deteriorate over time.



Bundled software As part of the supplied extras that come with the tablet, you can enjoy a trial of Photoshop Extended and Adobe's Illustrator.

Style The aesthetics of the M508W are very straightforward, with little design flare across its grey and black panels and buttons.

Pen slot The tablet has a pen holder tucked under the top lip of the unit to keep it out of the way when moving around.

Sleep mode There's also a button to temporarily put the tablet to sleep when not in use and revive it again simply, saving battery consumption.

Working area The 5 x 8-inch surface for its stylus can be altered to different ratios, including 4:3 and wide format settings.

Ten of the best...

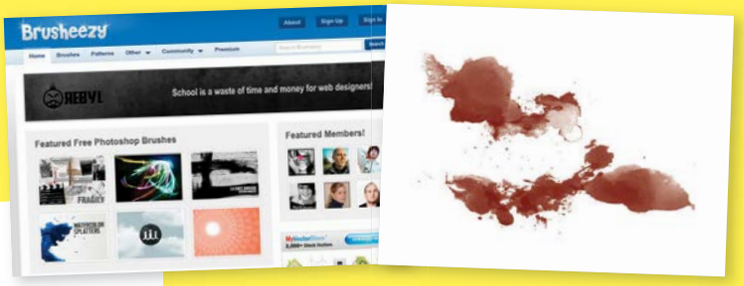
Free brush resources

Get your fill of free brushes from these ten great sites

Photoshop has an assortment of brushes pre-installed for digital painting. But when you've exhausted this, where do you look next? Here are our top ten online resources to make sure you don't run short of brushes and more importantly cash, as they're all free to download. Simply open up your Brushes palette, hit Load, and apply these high-resolution, artistic stamps to your artwork.

Brusheezy www.brusheezy.com

Join the Brusheezy community to start your own gallery of brushes, or if you're not in the mood to create, download from their huge library of thousands of Photoshop brushes. The site can organise brushes by the version of Photoshop you're using, or by most popular.



Texturemate www.texturemate.com

Texturemate not only produces wonderful textures, but brushes too. Made from the core of a texture, or created from scratch, the man behind this rich resource is Bill Scott. Brushes come in the guise of various symbols, spiral patterns, bricks, ink, wool and other surfaces for stamping.

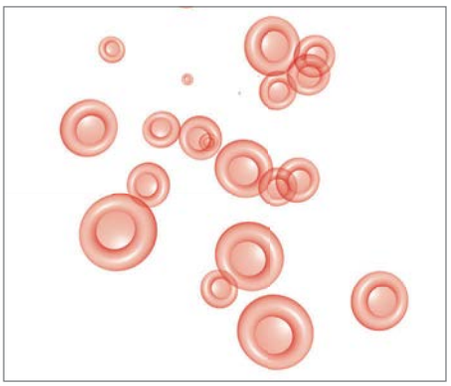
Webdesigner Lab http://webdesignerlab.com

Whether it's for a website design or an artistic creation, these brushes from Webdesigner Lab can be uploaded into Photoshop to paint onto your canvas. Search the tag cloud for the link to the website's brushes and enjoy floral, fractal, wood, brick wall, splatter and many more tips.

Fresh eMedia

www.freshemedia.com

Fresh eMedia has a handful of brush packs, such as Gradient Shapes, Audio Lines and Spray Paint, as well as its enormous 2,000+ Photoshop Brushes pack. The website offers quality brushes for free and we particularly like the graffiti-style Calligraphy brush set, made by award-winning designers.



Pixels & IceCream

www.pixelsandicecream.com

Pixels & IceCream is the resource blog by creative individual Jennifer Furlotte. In her regularly updated stream of posts, Jennifer designs brushes in the shapes of clothing, floral patterns, butterflies, trees and other stylish subject matter. This is one to watch and use for new projects and inspiration.

In Obscuro

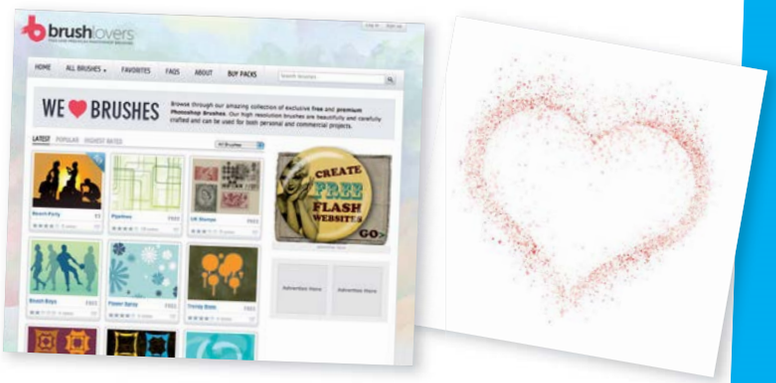
http://inobscuro.com

Nela Dunato produces a wealth of brushes to download with a dark and gothic vibe. Nela's website, In Obscuro, contains lace, paper, calligraphy, office tools, postage stamps and many other shapes in the form of brushes. Nela also shows how to put them to use in a helpful tutorial.

BrushLovers

www.brushlovers.com

It was a relationship that was meant to be. BrushLovers has a range of free and premium downloads to take into Photoshop comprising frames, patterns, complex shapes and rich textures. Categories include animals, decorative, fantasy, grunge, nature and people.



hawksmont Universe

http://hawksmont.com

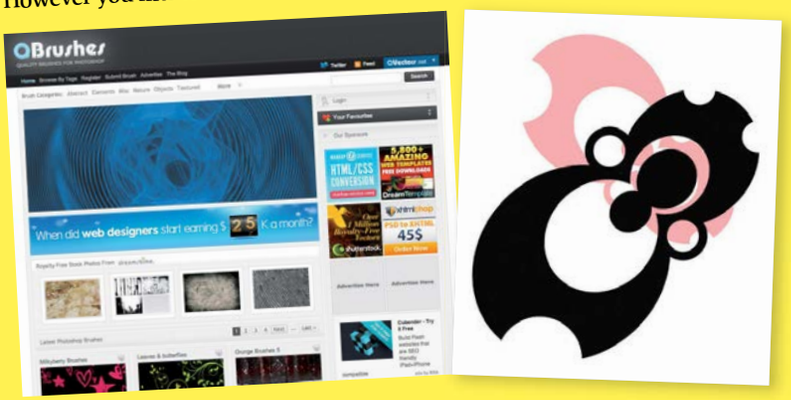
A generous amount of free brushes are available from here. Brushes take the shape of spiders, glowing lines, cracked lines, butterflies and many more so you can get stuck in. Hawksmont has even handcrafted the high-resolution spiders and webs, in case you were wondering!

Brushing Up www.brushing-up.com

Joe McDermott is the brushes mastermind behind this blog of resources. We particularly like the comic strip brushes with a halftone pattern for stamping onto your canvas. Others include sea creatures, farm animals and some comic book sayings, such as BAM! as a brush – cool.

QBrushes http://qbrushes.net

QBrushes is a collection of many artists and their brushes from across the web all in one spot, which gives you a huge variety of possible subject matter. Go to each artist's website or download straight from QBrushes. However you like to do it, this should be one for the Bookmarks.



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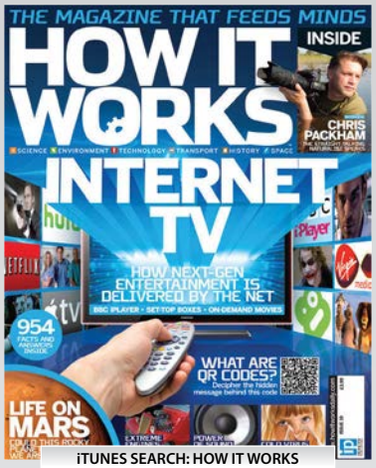

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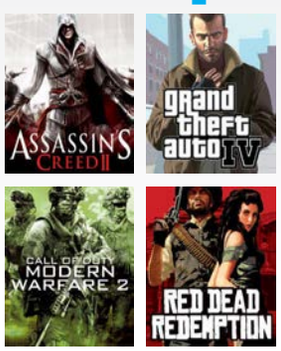

Whether you want to run to lose weight, get fit or meet personal goals, this app has everything you need to know

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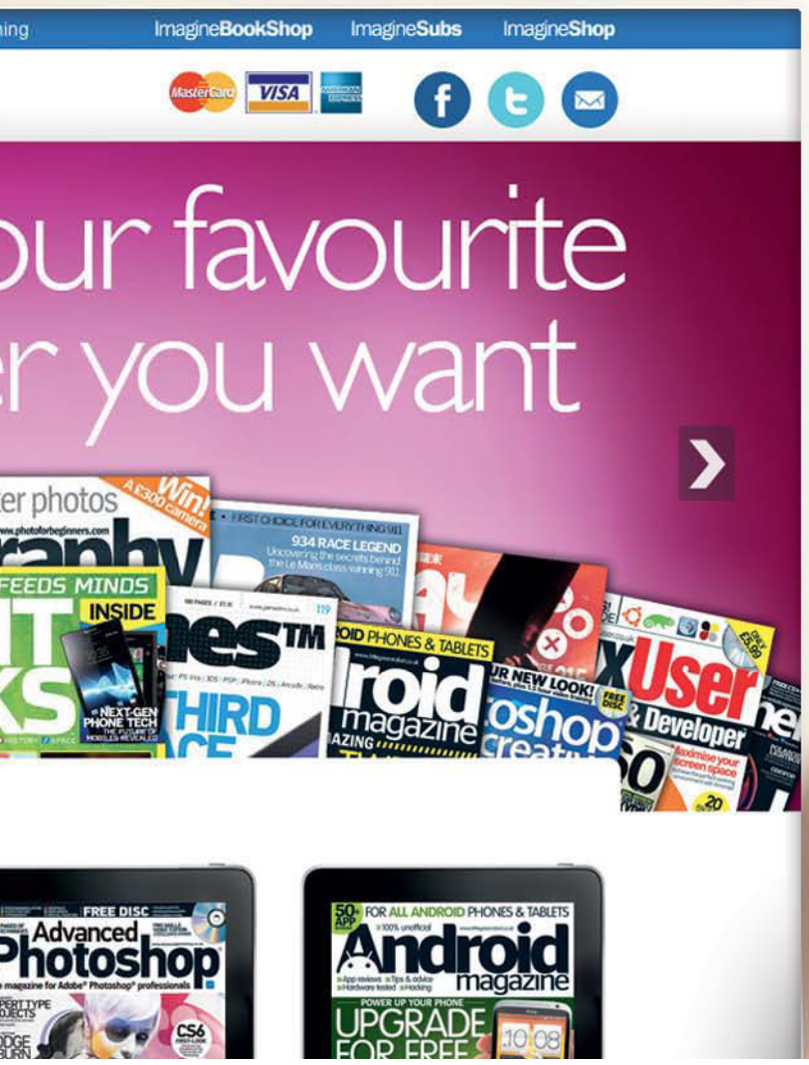

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Readers' Challenge entries

This month's hottest selection of entries for the Readers' Challenge

This is what you've all been waiting for, the winner and fellow competitors in this month's Readers' Challenge competition. In true Challenge style, the diversity of artwork was high, but there could only be one winner. Congratulations to Roger Baker for his image *Persistence of Memory*, which wins him this superb prize.

Other images include an Etch A Sketch drawing of a leopard, a vision of a dragonfly, elephants in a poppy field and an interesting religious symbol.

For next month's set of Challenge images and rules, head to page 98.

Readers' Challenge winner!

Roger Baker

Persistence of Memory

Roger Baker used close to 100 layers, including each shadow, to make his winning image. Using a number of our Challenge images, Roger tells us more about his working process: "many items were flipped so the light source for all seems the same. Every other image is an original photo of mine."

Karen Harris

Untitled

"I took out the background, cropped the photo to the grass from the bottom, turned the image black and white, and inverted it to give it a negative quality. I used Poster Edges and added the red poppies."

The prize

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The winner takes home a year's Premium subscription to Lynda.com worth $375. Lynda.com provides a huge range of online Photoshop courses for bettering your skills whenever you need. For your chance to win, send your images on a CD to Readers' Challenge, Photoshop Creative, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ, UK. Sorry, we can't return CDs. You can also email entries under 2MB to pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk.

www.lynda.com

Kashmir Quinn

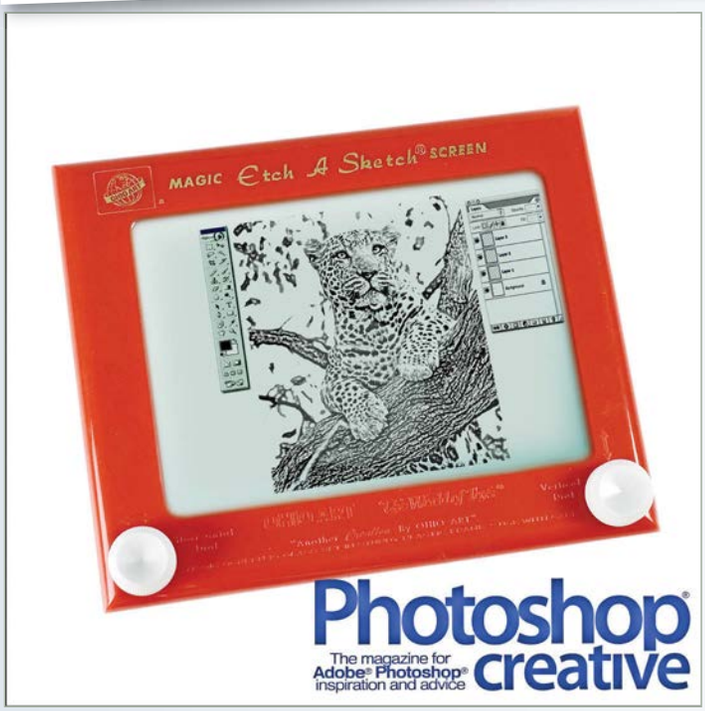
Dragonfly Visions

"Think of when Native Americans would have had visions in fiery smoke. What kind of visions would they've been?"

Alicja Wolkowska

Old Religion

"I've used images provided by **Photoshop Creative** and some custom and basic brushes. The border was made using one of my textures, the fog was created using a standard soft round brush and a bit of colour here and there."



George Vranjkovic

Photoshop (Back in the Good Old Days)

"I used the image of the leopard from issue 66 to put a modern spin on a classic toy. Hope you enjoy viewing this as much as I enjoyed making it."

Turn to page 98 and enter the Readers' Challenge today!

Download this month's images!

You can download the latest Readers' Challenge images from the **Photoshop Creative** site. Simply head over to **photoshopcreative.co.uk** and follow the Competition link.

Images are also available to download from photoshopcreative.co.uk

Readers' Challenge

Show us what you're made of and you could win this great prize!

It's that time again when a new Challenge opens its doors to your Photoshop artwork. Take all of the skills and techniques that you know and manipulate this month's selection of six images, which are available to download from your disc. Get inspired, get on your computer and create your own masterpiece in Photoshop then send it to us to be in with a chance of winning.

Use any number of the above six images, or any Challenge images from past issues of **Photoshop Creative**, and let your imagination take the driver's seat. The aim is to create a composition that really stands out, pushing your skills and the features of the program to the limit to impress our judges.

There are no rules to the Challenge, but the more you mix up and blend together the images with different techniques the better. Submit your artwork, tell us about the image and how it was made, and keep your eyes peeled on the next Challenge exhibition pages for the results (p96).

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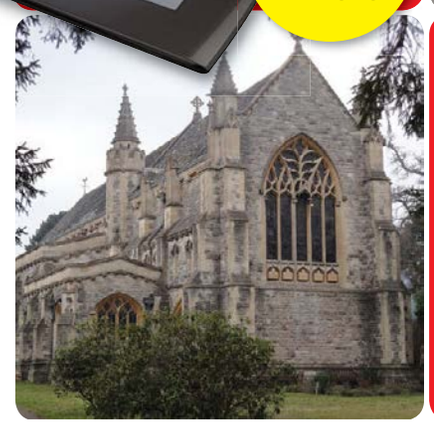

HOW TO ENTER

Access the Readers' Challenge folder from our CD and copy it to your desktop. Once you've completed your masterpiece, send it on a CD with your name, address and a few words about your creation to:

Readers' Challenge
Photoshop Creative
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset, UK
BH2 6EZ

NOTES | IF YOUR ENTRY IS UNDER 2MB, YOU CAN EMAIL IT TO US AT **PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK**. UNFORTUNATELY WE CAN'T RETURN CDS

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Enhance images with layers

The Layers palette is a hive of useful options for making better images. We reveal them all

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How to emulate this photographic style in your own images

Animation palette
Discover how easy it is to create your own animations in Photoshop

Top ten brush sites
We reveal the best places to go and download quality brushes for free